This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE

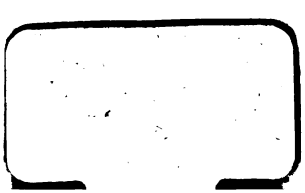
Digitized by Google

AL 1322.5.30

Harvard College Library

FROM

Prof. C. E. Norton.



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Ellen Russell Emerson.

NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE.
1 vol. 12mo, $1.25 *net*.

INDIAN MYTHS;
Or, Legends, Traditions, and Symbols of the Aborigines of America compared with those of Other Countries, including Hindostan, Egypt, Persia, Assyria, and China. With Map, numerous Plates and Diagrams. 8vo, gilt top, $5.00.

MASKS, HEADS, AND FACES.
With some considerations respecting the Rise and Development of Art. Illustrated 8vo, gilt top, $4.00.

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY,
BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

Digitized by Google

NATURE

AND HUMAN NATURE

BY

ELLEN RUSSELL EMERSON

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1902

Digitized by Google

AS 1322.5.30

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
APR 30 1903
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Prof. C. E. Norton.

COPYRIGHT, 1902, BY ELLEN RUSSELL EMERSON
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published March, 1902

Digitized by Google

TO MY HUSBAND

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

THE contents of this volume, compiled from notes when in field and forest or at work in archæological research, are proffered the student by way of commentaries. Had I been in hearing of my reader and fellow student it is likely that the notes would not have been taken, the enthusiasm of the hour occasioned by discovery of the curious habits of birds, plants, and lower animate life, or in laying hold of the labyrinthine thread of human development at some turn, finding avenue both through exclamations of surprise or delight, and sympathetic exchange of views.

In the compilation of my notes I have selected topics that were suggested in part by data accumulated and published with illustrations in a former work, these bearing evidence to the successive epochs of develop-

Digitized by Google

ment marking the evolution of human intelligence, — the chapters on structural devices and art especially based on this evidence. The initiation of advancement in which human nature assumes its high prerogative of maker of literature, inventor of arts, and composer of music, is traced to the primitive ceremonial, a study of which on the part of the writer gave rise to notes on the attitude of man toward natural phenomena, his imitative faculties whence he became "maker" invoked by early observation and naïve conclusions, and his language founded on natural environment, the result of which is that natural imagery so signally employed by Egyptian sages. It is in Egypt that is found the closeness of analogy between nature and human nature which modern science is rapidly disclosing, — a bequest on the part of Egyptian philosophy to religious thought that is of far-reaching import, for the science of correspondence used in disclosure of that analogy is full of reassurance, suggesting an indissoluble bond between nature and human

Digitized by Google

nature that shall exist to all eternity, man's will determining its effect just as a disposition to rise above the earth or to remain prone upon it established the line between winged and unwinged life. Suggestive and reassuring Egyptian imagery involves protracted research and heedful discrimination on the part of a student, his most secure method, as I found, accurate copies from the original writing. Egyptian writing includes vignettes and extended illustrations, and while my copies are the basis of a chapter upon natural imagery they are not included in the present work, the purpose of which is served if the reader is induced to carry forward analogies between nature and human nature, thus by experimental knowledge justifying the often quoted view that the seen is a manifestation of the unseen.

ELLEN RUSSELL EMERSON.

BOSTON, 1901.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	PURPOSE IN DEVICES OF PLANTS	1
II.	SENTIMENT IN STRUCTURAL DEVICES	28
III.	ART; OLD USAGES AND NEW DEMANDS	63
IV.	NOT SHADOW BUT LIGHT MESSAGE OF ART	107
V.	IDEALS AND "OUR OWN IMAGE"	139
VI.	BLINDNESS AND VISION	170
VII.	NATURAL IMAGERY	214
VIII.	LAW IN THINGS, LOVE AND RESURRECTION	250
IX.	MUSIC	263
X.	RHYTHM IN LANGUAGE	305
XI.	LITERATURE, LINGUISTS, AND POETS	329
XII.	DIVERSIFIED FORMS OF EXPRESSION	350
XIII.	THE SONNET AND PROPHECY	367
XIV.	INFLUENCES AND RESULTS	386

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE

I

PURPOSE IN DEVICES OF PLANTS

ESTRANGEMENT is impossible between nature and human nature for any length of time, the spring and source of all life being one. There is a relationship between yonder planets fringing the rim of the sunset, the young moon and Venus her attendant star, and the immortelles that thread the brow of the hill with a silvery band, since these living pearls and the sky's living gems dimpling the oncoming dark are born of Eternal Light. And there is a close affinity between a child and the immortelles and the young moon together with its attendant star, for is not the child heir of nature?

As the winged insect discloses its antecedent form so does man, the network of motor nerves, those radiating cords ramifying

Digitized by Google

the human mechanism providing operative power, have a prototype in the fibrous bundles of the vascular and cellular tissue of the leaves of a tree, and these in turn are similar to the nervures of insects, those tubes that give expansion to the insect's wing when it launches upon the invisible air.

Action is like in like environment among corresponding forms, and governed by kindred impulses of fear or delight it produces similar results, providing means of reorganization and metamorphoses. In the profound depths of the sea a lamp was constructed by a curious denizen of the dark depths; this lamp evolved by processes whereby are all formulations made by life immanent in matter, and affixed to this sea-child's shoulder, growing therefrom, this lamp is a lantern to lesser fish, both their amazement and destruction, for its purpose is none other than a decoy, — a means the inventor evolved to obtain food. An imitation of the sun, it is calculated excellently to make the portals of death even a pleasurable if surprised entrance into one of the multitudinous pits of reorganization which nature manufactures; imitation, mimicry, and likeness her

Digitized by Google

web of design. And nature is peculiarly attractive when she affirms kinship throughout the phenomena of form by some sudden masquerade; a resemblance in the face of a flower to human lineaments charms all the world; that the pansy demurely mimics the grandame whose high cap border flares about her serious brow as she sits in doorway contentedly surveying these lowly flowers crowding up the newly weeded earth gives this plant an enduring grace. But if in gentle burlesque there is charm through resemblance, there is profound pleasure in recognition of similarity in adaptive devices, — that plants, for instance, assume relationship with their environment, in a degree controlling it as does man, since it is thus made evident that intelligence is fundamental to form, thinking processes or their equivalent marking structural evolution or maintenance. And so it is not a poetic fantasy that the shower-washed things of spring, developing in the advancing season, are tremulous with a joy expressed in the song of the bird; or, to use another example, that the insect and bird inhabitants of the world think, — that, in brief, the universe is an embodiment of

Digitized by Google

Reason, its several parts, like the organs of the human body, more or less conscious.

Are not examples of wisdom on the part of the plant like those of the animal world? The cicada, for example, is directed by thought when, liberated by its own efforts, it hastens to precipitate itself upon the unknown realm beneath from the high, overarching branch wherein had been its cradle. Instinct? Surely; but what is instinct but unproclaimed and voiceless reason? Such, indeed, is that which prompts all animate life to seek its necessary environment. Does not the common worm give proof of having an idea how to settle herself even more comfortably than did the Indian woman in her tent? for observe how securely she fastens a carefully selected leaf edge to edge, the silken twine her own manufacture, taut but unbroken. Is this purposeless work? By no means; for the green leaf, folded with such dexterity, and lined with silk furthermore, is the little carpenter's tent, which, with the freedom of an Arab, she attaches and reattaches as the necessity for fresh feeding ground demands.[1]

[1] Carpenter moth.

Digitized by Google

And are we to view with disdain that queer little figure, the foreign monk, with his feather baton in reverential zeal brushing the turf on which he walks, fearful that his foot should crush the worm? Let us look into these small matters, and we need not wear the monk's hood to learn something of value betraying our own kinship to lower animal life.

Moreover, correlation of insects and plants, while giving coherence to natural phenomena, is purposeful and often neighborly. The leaf is not only given for a dwelling but for food. Out of its abundance the garden shrub affords shelter and nourishment to myriad organisms, its dependents in the course of evolution at length developing into conditions that challenge the plant's blossoms in color and shape.

Neighborliness, a means of evolution, rebukes indolence, as also self-abandonment. To prevent degeneracy the insect must spin, and so must the plant, whose woof is of sunbeams and dew. And thus is evolution and variation in insect and flower, the one winged, the other in bloom, the former charged with the golden treasure of the latter as it roves from chalice to chalice.

Digitized by Google

Reason sits at the door of the universe and plies her shuttle, and behold, the gay frigates in the air and the lustrous turf a-quiver with bloom!

Reason in things at the beginning covered the barren rock thrown up by submarine volcanoes, and at the first contact with air the rock is covered with minute plants, yellow and gray; those colors followed by blue and green as their construction changes, — a process to be witnessed annually upon the broad marshes fronting the level sea. For the unseen shuttle of the presiding Form-Maker flying back and forth permits no rest to the aerial magician thus met; complex forms develop from uncomplex, — the leaf, a marvel of living growth, a breathing organ, puts forth a tiny offspring, and behold, the first blossom of God! the elder brother of the child! And this plant-child expands and fruits, a harbinger of the garden wherein the grandame sits with her mimic crowd of miniature faces. Wait on this thought, cavillers of the privilege and gift of life, degenerates in spirit, too indolent to spin or weave with the zeal of plant or worm, claiming that all is vexation of spirit,

Digitized by Google

that all things if they wax, wane; that even the ideals of man fade and pass with the generation wherein they were born. Shall nature outdo human nature? the plant evolve the rose through cycles of change, and man cease to heed ideals? Impossible; the Ideal is the only Real. The soul has its seed within itself, as the plants in the Garden of Eden.[1]

But to return to the marvels of the Form-Maker in nature, prototype of the marvels of human nature and of which none are greater than the plants of the sea, for marine plants form neither calyx nor corolla, but marine animals have a way that, if brimming with ambitions, also is a prophecy: organizing themselves into groups, and putting forth branches and buds that expand mysterious tentacles which have the appearance of corollas, they hint at what shall come to pass on the engrounded rock, deep breasted with fertile earth. For these organisms have communal ideas, and to that degree is their neighborliness developed at approach of danger they give warning one to another; thus at rude touch, with a swing as per-

[1] Genesis i. 11.

Digitized by Google

force of gliding current, the one part, or branch, alarmed, warns the next above or below upon the family stalk, which in turn warns its neighbor, when suddenly, from radiance of simulated flowers the whole household folds up into a snug coterie of buds, — sea anemone! and all as sensitive as the windflower, its bright representative in the woodlands.

Movement and locomotion are easy to natives of the sea, but there is indolence as well as activity among them, many preferring the shallows, disliking lonely adventure and self-locomotion, so settling themselves in the ooze as the bivalves; these children of nature therefore standing small chance before an enemy paying the penalty of the un-self-reliant. Activity indeed seems to bear some direct ratio to substance — for the least of creatures, those corpuscles, the algæ's first parents, are incomparably active, even as is Thought. Creatures that have not substance enough even to be opaque swim as fish, twist like worms, glide like serpents, and, mere points to the naked eye, have powers of locomotion suggesting an impetus as imperious as polar electricity, — this, an indwelling

Digitized by Google

light, supposing that force possessed of purpose and wit to carry the purpose to desired issue. And these atoms have a will of their own, quite adequate to growth and reproduction, a fact adding emphasis to the encouraging statement in respect to human power exerted supposably upon the removal of mountains.

Marine plants are to a large degree free lances, exhibiting indifference as to their habitat, often fixing themselves to whatever chances as if in blind coherence. While the land plants have a choice as to the soil they plunge their feet into, — indeed, are not their seeds weighted or winged, securing the chances of choice?

Bohemianism is of early date among seafarers, an inconsequence as to footing common to Monad and Nomad! But critical though the land plants, precipitous uplifts often reduce them to difficult straits; hence that desperate sign of distress, the cedar's helpless root stiffly probing an unbridged chasm, its stem leaning as for protection against the cleaving earth.

In mountain districts bloom is sudden as if forced by an autocratic shove of the shuttle

Digitized by Google

that had plied itself at leisure in the shallows of cosmos. Here the observer finds necessary a strenuous determination to lose no time if desirous to lay hold of the marvels of spring-tide. And it is most likely that at the unbridged chasm, where the cedar is at such straits, — a chasm unscalable by human feet, — a bush of Ophir is laden with abundant gold — a mountain-born Mimulus shining in a sheen of living sunbeams, and a mimic withal as the pansy, but with a tricky monkey face.

The mountain ever bears a reminiscence of its primitive rush when forced upward by volcanic impulses; it has dripping declivities and its universal colors are yellow or gray, followed by drifts of columbine, blues and rhus greens. And on its acclivities the advancing foot is met by bands of toiling insects whose activity eclipses that of the first parents of the algæ, while it is on the broad plateau, where bearded grasses declare themselves masters of the situation, showing a rascal temper as they strike for lodgment into unprotected foot, that ambitious plants crowd upon each other, elbowing their neighbors. Infested with difficulties, and never reached except for a purpose and

Digitized by Google

after a strenuous climb in hazardous paths among gnarled roots and craggy steeps traveled by spring torrents, — a visit to mountain regions teaches how close are the similitudes of nature's combat with adverse storms and man's, neither yielding, and each at last ascendant in a prescribed realm. And the mountain bears upon its scarred shoulders trophies of rare constructions, these showing that in high regions the shuttle of Reason had been plied to the end of purer and more ideal shapes than in the primitive cosmos. How diverse the structure of the first flower in the seething shallows of those primitive seas and the Alpine rose!

Processes of development are stubbornly maintained, however, in the mountain barrens, as in the coverts and pastures of the sea, the energy of Life distilling dew from hidden sources, barrens and coverts equally an assurance of the Reason in things whose adaptations of means to end discloses prevision, that prerogative of pure mind undominated by limitations of matter.

And on plain as on mountain these adaptations suggest a fine subtilty, for Reason wrought out some problems at the begin-

Digitized by Google

ning in the weft that show in the fabric of things, these variations giving opportunity for divergencies in the woof.

It is permissible that, set among crowding chaparral, the saguarra from a lowly estate shall become a rival to the lofty pine, as thus it is able to exhibit its precious blossoms and, inviting the visiting insect, accomplish the ends of its development.

Accommodation to circumstances is common in plant life, and it has been observed that a plant will turn and curve quite about in order to get into position to send its stem into the light, while as often the root of the stem will bend in the opposite direction, driving its tip beneath the soil, so avoiding the light, movements as direct and purposeful as any conscious act of the human being in providing against some adverse circumstance which threatens its welfare.

Arising with all the organs of vegetal life complete, root, stem, and leaves previously rolled up in the seed, the plant begins to develop the flower, that miracle of construction quite surpassing all antecedent parts, though prophesied by them. And the will-power which is disclosed in the maturing

Digitized by Google

plant dominates the final stage when is achieved the birth of the seed, for reproduction is the end of the laborious cycle of activity, — that which may be termed centrifugal and centripetal forces raising the stem and extending the root with all that precision with which the planets are held in orbit. And the purpose of securing for itself perennial life demands avoidance of injury to both root and stem, and often by a twist on the part of one and the putting forth of thorns and prickles on the part of the other the plant will steadily oppose itself to those destructive influences arising from environment or through foreign invasion, so showing that plant energy is as persistent as human energy. Has not a plant splintered a rock in order to get foot room, has it not turned aside from subterranean obstacles sensed without touch of rootlet? And what contortions are made, the gyrating stem turning upon itself at need of support when its course is straight as a driven stake, the point desired at last reached! A plant puts forth a stem in place of a leaf, and with this green finger tip awaits a propitious moment when, aided by the rising wind, it

Digitized by Google

will approach a sturdy neighbor, and lo, the finger becomes a hook as strong as a parrot's beak, and thus moored the plant laughs in ruddy flowers and purple berries, garlanding living shores of green in grateful profusion.

It is pleasant to consider the manœuvres of plants in their effort to establish themselves happily in the land of their nativity, for it is in observation of these manœuvres is perceived that sensitiveness, fatuously limited to animal life, is developed in so-called inanimate life to a remarkable degree, and this too even in barren places, the desert abounding in so-called sensitive plants, there, as elsewhere, indeed, though in less degree, a concordant action being exercised to the end of overcoming unpropitious conditions. On the desert is found the cactus, whose leaves are a reservoir of living water distilled from the atmosphere and whence is slaked the thirst of the hungry bud rising from amid a prickly guard, sentinels of this queen nymph, whose glory of color at last declares the chemics of the plant wisely combined those chemics maintained in equable proportion throughout the flowering period in the leaf's distil-

Digitized by Google

lery, and whose abundance is maintained by the limitation of the circumference of each plant, that apparent arid space between neighbors a security to individual distillation.

Equal prevision is exercised by the sand verbæna, its unctuous leaves a means of water-supply, this nectar appearing to impart such exhilaration to the flowers that they exhale fragrance in very delight and thanksgiving. And it is but necessary to watch the ineffectual invasion of an insect when a plant has eliminated from its water tank gummy juices to realize the astuteness of its devices, while if other examples are needed they appear to the observer of the ignorant foraging of a lamb whose maturing appetite sets it nibbling among those plants which have provided against such contingencies by a bristling guard of thorns set in tufts or in alternate rows. But another testimony should be added in order to give full weight to the foregoing evidences of the wisdom of plants, and that is the manufacture of poisons, concoctions of the more desperate of these children of the earth whose efficacy among varied measures adopted for self-pre-

Digitized by Google

servation has given both the poison oak and ivy immunity from depredations at flowering period, so insuring berries for the late regalement of hardy birds. And these methods of self-preservation are anticipatory to renewed existence by way of the seed wherein the spark from the Esse of Life is preserved, and it is the care with which the plant protects itself in seedtime that declares most its wisdom. There is the lacquer covering leaf-buds filched by the purloining bee to seal up its offspring in safety in a happy imitation of the wise trees; and there is the albumen in the lyre-like seed-leaves of the maple, where is the *cella* of the young dryad of maple groves; there are also the plumes giving aerial flight to the too numerous progeny of the dandelion on whom crowding neighbors have the effect to ruffle up their mats and destroy the seclusion desired.

Plants seek a happy environment, hence the elasticity of the spiral cases of the lowly burr clover which acts as a distributive hand providing against that gregariousness that is often occasion of poverty and degeneracy.

Reëmbodiment, the aim of reproduction, among plants is ushered in by structural

Digitized by Google

marvels that would be inconceivable were there no visible proofs at our very doors, and this event is always an occasion of the utmost glory of color compatible with the situation; and so each denizen of the soil declares that Beauty is attribute of Being. Such is the declaration of the orchid afloat on extended petals in the air — a mimic butterfly, image of immortality.

But it is unnecessary to give examples; for is it not well established among plants that the ritual of Aphrodite demands adornment, the secret reason for diverse preferences known only to the plant, specialized chemics providing variation satisfactory to all concerned? — giving the red of the rose, the purple of the heliotrope and yellow of the daffodil, the color of each flower showing individuality respected by the flower lover, who views with disfavor a blue rose, for example, or a rose-red water-lily, living snowflake of the lake, — these changes a misguided miscegenation destructive to the manifest individuality of the plant. It is an arrogant man, indeed, who intrudes himself into the affairs of nature, who recolors plants, depriving them of the results of self-develop-

Digitized by Google

ment! Is it an improvement to crowd the single-petaled flower with duplications twisted and misshapen, that, trespassing upon the marriage altar, are like a hustling crowd of inebriates?

There are conditions which nature has laid down to human nature, wise as it is, and these unheeded, chaos results. Even a pope might not dictate with impunity in his own church when a Michael Angelo had brush in hand!

Nature's workshop is the temple of art, the artisans the living flowers, each having preferences that lie in the path of purposes known only to itself; and who among the greater authorities of the earth is equal to dictation, these purposes, occasion of all the flower's manœuvres, unknown?

Plants breathe, eat, and drink; coil, recoil, pierce the soil with a force opposed to aught less dense than a rock, which, however, awaiting the helpful fingers of frost it shoulders and thrusts apart, thus gaining admittance to the succulent breast of the earth. And, like the young of the human species, plants are born princes, demanding regal attendants around their cradles, Apollo and

Digitized by Google

Diana their foster-parents. Observe the dandelion, so often ruthlessly shorn by the sickle. Year by year it lays its green mat, sends up a hollow stem like an elfin's pipe, and fabricates first a miniature sun and then a marvelous sphere, delicate, aerial, which a breath from zephyr thieves destroys.

Members of a lowly republic, these democratic flowers maintain themselves against all odds, and in princely fashion, Buddhas, they sit upon their mats in right royal manner, a single majesty that does not rob them of the dominance of numbers, for, as in a republic, each individual rules to the extreme limit of his door-mat, his neighbor ruling in like manner. The lowlier species are crowded out, though their right of occupancy is indisputable. And this is the result of prevision, for did not the dandelion give wing to its seed for the purpose of occupying just such a plateau? Profound, indeed, are the meditations of these our golden-disked Buddhas!

Thoughts are known in deeds, and it is evident that all nature exercises a degree of understanding, even the most minute organ-

Digitized by Google

ism possessing a certain consciousness.[1] And this understanding is curiously politic, a subtilty marking adaptive devices that applied in human affairs would insure success.

But plant wisdom, it should be remembered, is circumscribed to single motives, for its preferences exist and are exercised to the end of self-perpetuation. A signal evidence of this fact is shown in its preparation of food in anticipation of the critical appetite of the germinating state when the embryo dies if not so fed, being unable to take the ordinary sustenance of its mature state; without this food, indeed, all vegetal life would cease: those oak-groves, whose leaves supplied chaplets to the druid as their branches a natural temple for the mystic rites, were developed from a seed provided with this pap; the maples with their grand glory of color, and the pines, whose stems furnish masts to the winged ship, — both plant and tree dependent alike on the laboratory wherein was made the magic food.

No chance provision, no accidental conditions are the nourishers of the infant plant.

[1] It has been said of the human organism that its every cell gives evidence of faint consciousness.

Digitized by Google

It is an intelligent protective act of the plant, itself the informed chemist of nature who prepared for the offspring's early need. Provisional variation of color and form are the lesser marvels of plant wisdom surely, when compared with these previsions of a state of helplessness in anticipation of which such delicate labor of the little plant mother is done. A most interesting example of wisdom in these children of the earth, how suggestive of the intellectuality of the forces of life! Mind coming in contact with matter electrifies it; so dust itself, permeated throughout with the fiery particle of Being, is, as it were, metamorphosed into a Pyrozoma.

But it is not to be forgotten that this wisdom, which is an attribute of life and imminent in all things, in the plant is exercised to the end of self-preservation, the plant being determined at all odds to live again; beauty of form, beauty of color, food for its young, subserving the one object of reproduction, — a combination of activities triumphant only in securing renewal of life by way of "seed of its own kind."

True of plants, this purpose and desire

Digitized by Google

permeates and directs the habits of animate life. "I must live," is the declaration of every creature. "I must and will live!" As in the lower organism so in the higher; as in the plant so in the animal; higher organisms determining on perpetuity of existence, the animal exercising all ingenuity and force of will to that end.

The wisdom exercised by the plant would be impossible if it did not possess some degree of consciousness, and it is this consciousness of its own existence that is incentive in endeavor to preserve that existence; for it is not supposable that methods discriminatingly employed according to environment are unconscious or automatic. The plant's consciousness is not, however, differentiated in kind from that of those brainless creatures of the lower kingdom of the so-called animate world who have wit to employ means of self-preservation, for consciousness is the same in one as the other, it being a prerogative of life.

Life is not dependent on matter, living cells multiplying and flourishing in the entire absence of matter;[1] their activity, it

[1] Louis Pasteur.

Digitized by Google

should be remembered, result of self-consciousness; for where life is there is consciousness — and mind. Furthermore, where is consciousness there is determination on perpetuity. And, so great is this determination, many forms of life become increasingly pugnacious. Thus, among plants, poisons, thorns, and prickles were invented; among animals, horns; among fish, swords; among birds, talons; each armored for the purpose of self-protection; and it is well known that to protect their offspring birds offer their own lives, and this that they may live again, — in effect by losing their life they find it!

And here it may be asked, if perpetuity is the aim of lower animate life, is it not of the highest animate life? Does not man equally aspire to live again, and shall it be concluded that he also gains his desire through offspring?

But no, and for the reason that man is unable to reproduce his counterpart in offspring, his individuality a possession impossible to another. Individuality is limited to class in lower animate life, while extended to persons among men. Each man is an integer, a single being, whose personality is

Digitized by Google

unmistakable, and the distinctness of his individuality is maintained as unvaryingly as that distinction which is maintained between diverse species in lower animal life. But does not this singleness of being, which is impossible to be conveyed to offspring, place man among the least fortunate of his brethren, the beasts and birds?

What object is served in this marvelous structural perfection wherein individualism is evolved, if life is less satisfactorily maintained and perpetuated? Consider the cedars, — the giants of the Sierras, — how the centuries pass like clouds, vanishing in the horizon, their lives unimperiled. Inventing means of self-preservation as formidable as the armature evolved by lower organisms, shall man be unable to prolong his life even to the average life of this tree whose structure is far less complex than the human organism? He has the desire for perpetuity of life and seeks it with a constancy that is unsurpassed by plant or animal, and all methods fail!

There are organisms in the sea whose term of existence is unlimited, but this degenerate lives but a half century, at the widest span

Digitized by Google

little more than a century! Were he a worm subject to metamorphoses, an unending cycle of existence were his; and the life of a worm has its winged epoch, its hour of joy, when, floating in the air a delicate frigate, its sails living wings gemmed and rainbowed, it secures its perpetuity. And compared with this marvel how coarse is the frame of man! Human nature is incomparable with nature in refinement if considered apart from its moral and intellectual possibilities; as an animal, indeed, man is inferior to his sires; in most directions outstripping the highest physical evolution, successes compassed by throes the imagination fails to picture, and in which all energy was applied in battling the way upward to security, he has missed the mark! But no, that structural completeness fulfills a purpose of grand import. It gives an arena for thought, and thought in turn prepares the way to the individual, to judicious selection and choice which is the basis of the individualism which is man's special prerogative at the very turning-point where is apparent degeneracy, the brain serving for activities that are immanent in the structure of the flower, the leaf, nest of bird,

Digitized by Google

cell of bee, web of spider, and the columnar stateliness of the tree. In effect the human brain is the crowning achievement of the toil and address of the energies of life, the evolution of mentality represented by and parallel to physical evolution and equally slow as the process which from the reptile developed the bird — a crowning achievement! And man's mentality, rich with the argosy of nature's ideals, is characterized by that marvelous power which changed the hiss of the snake to the cadenza of the lark, so transfiguring natural phenomena and glorifying it.

The human mind may be likened to that lord of the air in Mexican myth, who, perceiving the radiance of the leaves in autumn, breathed upon them, when each leaf, detaching itself, rose singing above the hills, the air becoming peopled with varicolored birds: for after this manner the human mind transfigures the real into ideal life. And, a receptacle of nature's imagery, human nature is endowed with not only its charm, but its continuity, for it is in man's mentality that the law of perpetuity, object of evolution, is at its apex of power; and thus in defeat man becomes victor.

Digitized by Google

A myth is recorded in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, so-called, illustrated by a harvest scene, located in a valley surrounded by four rivers. This valley, fertilized by the rivers, is filled with grain whose stalks are many cubits high, towering, indeed, far above the head of the harvester, who is seen with sickle in hand amidst the grain, the results of his labor suggested by the broken stalks near him. This harvester, it appears from the text, is an Immortal, and the grain is Truth, claimed to be the food and sustenance of human souls, and without which man dies as the embryo of the plant dies without the food prepared by the little mother-plant in the vegetal world. In this curious fashion the priests of Egypt, while recognizing the desire universal to humanity for personal immortality, points out a means whereby it may be attained.

Digitized by Google

II

SENTIMENT IN STRUCTURAL DEVICES

THE life of each plant is a protest against the accusation that variation and modification in the realm of inanimate nature are mechanical. Indeed, to claim that the least atom possessing life is without intelligence is in effect to shut the door of the universe in God's face; and the audacity of this claim is the more apparent from observation of the slow development in man of a sense of that proportion which gives grace to the object of his invention, as compared with the immediate sense of proportion in the insect and bird species.

Compare the "dug-out" of the Indian woman with the shaft of the burial beetle, or her tent with the silken den of the mason spider, what ingenuity and adaptation of means to an end on the part of the little folk, familiars of air and earth — and what

Digitized by Google

thriftless oblivion to means near by and, so to speak, thrust upon the woman!

And while invention, that universal gift to animate life, prompts the least atom of intelligent life to form-making as the most highly developed and representative, it is a mistake to imagine that there is no delight in proportion and even in details of structure. It was the privilege of the writer to witness the making of their nest by a pair of hummingbirds, in which the painstaking of the two birds was not less evident than the satisfaction when the nest was completed, this satisfaction shown in particular by the female, which, having made many voyages into far fields with her mate for the purpose of gathering thistle-top, fibre from palms, and lichen from the woods, all to be applied in construction, after a little period of absence appeared alone and alighting on the supporting bough carefully inspected the nest outside and inside, her movements amusingly feminine, the head turned now and then sideways, an air of connoisseurship in general poise of body, as also an "I thought so!" when a defect was discovered, this prompting the application of a sharp

Digitized by Google

bill, when a refractory fibre was pulled away from the outer rim of the nest to be replaced afterward, and so adjusted that all was smooth and compact. And this accomplished, a renewed survey appeared to give satisfaction, and the little householder settled down upon the supporting bough, her breast against the outside of the nest, the alert air now vanishing, her demeanor giving an evidence not only of content but pleasure. How long the little bird would have remained in quiet enjoyment it is impossible to conjecture, for in a few moments her spirited liege darted into the shady nook and with an incisive note awoke his mate to her duties, and in an instant there was a twirl and flash of wings, and the pair vanished.

Perfection and adaptation of means to ends is characteristic of nest structures, the more dainty the builder, indeed, the greater the refinement of sentiment, a more astute judgment ever characterizing the little folk of God. This is illustrated in comparing the hummingbird's nest mentioned above and an eagle's nest, the nicety of the former suggesting a Cellini dexterity, the beak of the bird doing duty for the hand of the artisan.

Digitized by Google

In most cases the bird's beak suggests more directness than finesse; the hand, however, suggests both finesse and directness according to position, and when the thumb and finger meet care is expressed, the other fingers curled away in the palm or outstretched as anxious but distant coadjutors. But if all fingers are curled, the thumb locking them in, a blow may be anticipated. The human fist in effect is not unlike the spider as to outward appearance when that insect has hold of its silken rope and so swinging awaits its prey.

The spider's agility is equal to the hand's dexterity, if the hand is directed in search of food; but supposing, for instance, the object be decorative, as in the case of the construction of a Cellini vase (to continue the illustration used above), — invention here applied to the æsthetic, and in obedience to the love of the beautiful, — shall parallel be found then? Is a spider endowed with perception of proportion and delicacy of outline, dictating beauty of design? Consider her labor, did she spin as perfectly as Cellini delineated? Let the microscope number the strands of her silken rope, and the eye trace its interlacement against the radiant sky!

Digitized by Google

There was more than sentiment in the impersonation of the spider by the Greek, as it betrays the instinct for which his people became leaders in the world of ideal form. The ideal proportion and completeness of design in nature of which the Greek was imitator is reluctantly classed as representative of æsthetic feeling; but it is difficult to discriminate between causes that produce like results, and the history of man declares that when invention was applied for utilitarian purposes, decoration was practiced.

Is not the bower-bird's arch a remarkable instance of decorative instinct? And who has not witnessed the disappointment, nay, petulant wrath, of a winged builder when the nest proved unshapely? Surely the original concept, based on love of proportion, is occasion of that imperious disdain followed by immediate demolition of the structure!

Structural instincts, in which purity of line such as dictated the construction of the Parthenon, lie deep in the mysteries of that insect life which spins and weaves tent and cradle; nor is it possible to assert that a conscious æsthetic sentiment does not have an influence upon methods applied in the labor,

Digitized by Google

since this labor is prompted by affections on which may be predicated both will and understanding, these attributes shown by nice discriminations, a fastidiousness in selection of building materials, for instance, or of a mate, love even among insects demanding perfection, while the judgment when so exercised is as unerring as it is rigorous. And it is that conscious selection and discrimination in the least form of animate life which betrays the trend of nature, all things by a common consent climbing the golden stair of self-development.

The votive offering, first fabricated by woman, was prompted by the universal evidence of sentiments akin to her own among forces assumed to be deific controlling life; but the purpose, it should be remembered, which dictated the offering was a desire for protection for herself and offspring, and in this respect she was moved by feelings kindred to those which prompted protective devices in lower animate and inanimate life. That these deific forces would be pleased with her offering she was assured of by the instincts of her own heart; and herein appears the feeling that attests to powers of

Digitized by Google

imagination that the lives of plants and animals give no evidence of, their inventions disclosing a systematic self-reliance, neither appeal nor token of trust on other power than that which is of immediate experience being indicated.

But the earliest votive offerings are often destitute of attractiveness in texture or in form, imagination seeming to have no effect in the fabrication of these objects, if suggesting their consecration.

The cup that the Sicilian Greek placed at the entrance of the majestic temple now shrineless on the Mediterranean shore, brought to view by the ploughshare of the husbandman, is a crude invention compared with the nest of a bird. Primitive skill was inapt and clumsy, little suggestive of that after skill which chipped away at the Pentelic marble, discovering a god.

And these votive offerings were of advanced completeness of design compared with the primitive temples, those being but rude constructions and hidden retreats built by men for men.

And herein was Adam's second blunder, for the primeval woman is the originator of

Digitized by Google

decorative art. With something of the fastidiousness of the hummingbird, her awakening intuitions demanded somewhat better than the lairs which primeval men constructed as fanes in honor of deific forces, the gods of sun and rain, a development of woman's taste and skill occurring at a comparatively early period, — this shown by the oriole-like cradle she invented for her offspring, and her feather and bead work, these being accomplishments possessed by her at the period when the primitive temple bore little evidence of a sentiment for the beautiful. And, moreover, it is due to woman that these primitive structures were at length graced by ceremonial robes and sacred vessels, these being of her manufacture. It was she who figured those devices on the ceremonial robes and sacred vessels which subsequently through association were used as a sacred text, she unwittingly thus originating a pictographic writing. But it is a curious anomaly that while woman actually invented a symbolism that expressed the purport of the consecrated building, many figures of which are retained in decorative ecclesiastical art, she was long regarded as a baleful influence, and her entrance

Digitized by Google

into the temple a doubtful expedient. It is true that this sentiment, if not so acknowledged, was due to man's frailty, to bar against which he assumed her more frail, an attitude easily maintained, since the primeval woman was but half-child and half-animal, her first instinct demanding of her the construction of a home-place, a tepee, as the bird's instinct demands a nesting-place. And shelter was the primary incentive to domestic architecture, whereas rites of worship demanded security from interruption, the idea of personal shelter being small incentive, kirkly luxuries the last to be demanded. An analysis, indeed, of the motives of temple building discloses that the incentive was not a desire for physical comfort, but for seclusion, so imperious was this idea, the governing motif is an exclusion of the outside world, the purpose of the structure, however simple or elaborate, not to give light but to exclude it, the window, in fact, unknown until long after advance in structural completeness had been made in other directions.

Furthermore, the desire for seclusion, demanded and effected by darkness, influenced

Digitized by Google

the proportions of the structure to the limitation of space for enshrinement of the divinity, as also restricting the movements of the devotee. The temples of Egypt were characterized by this effort at seclusion, as also the Doric temples of Greece. So universal a custom suggests a common sentiment, a sentiment that was inculcated by nature. It had been perceived that great forces, the *movers*, as Dante terms them, are unseen, and it was conjectured, doubtless, that these forces, these gods, desired seclusion, hence, notwithstanding the Egyptians and Hellenes, for example, were sun-worshipers, their principal gods, Ra and Apollo, solar divinities, their temples were so constructed that they seem to exclude, by barring out light, the very god to whom they were dedicated! And this seclusion demanded devices that had little regard to internal structure; it was sufficient that publicity was avoided. Although the principal forms of architecture, the so-called Trabeate and the Gothic, represent eras in the development of ideas respecting the divine power governing the universe, there is the same determination to set apart a place of seclusion in the methods

Digitized by Google

of construction, and within which should be enshrined the oracle or idol. The Trabeate style, for example, which the Greeks brought to such perfection, suggests solidity, — the solidity of a block, the cella representative of a sentiment of profound reserve that is entirely out of keeping with the open life of an ingenuous people, the added columns, while suggesting illumination, being foils to the temple's sombre interior, reminding one of the white-stemmed trees at the entrance of a grotto. Forest rites, and the worship of the grove and grotto, were all in harmony with this sentiment, and the methods of construction followed the dictation of these associations, a sentiment that declared itself in both mimetic rites, which were secret, and the form of the temple.

Publicity violated the sensitive gods, and seclusion their choice it provided a security to their residence within the consecrated places of concealment; thus, though not for his own shelter, it was for the shelter of the gods which the constructive instincts of man were evoked, a shelter that was a secret place, a region of shadow and silence.

In Egypt, it is true, there was always a con-

Digitized by Google

sideration as to the point whence arose the sun. It appeared desirable that the temple in its outward aspect should face that luminary, and there seems to be some reminiscent concept which ruled this orientation of the temple such as was held in Peru, where, however, the sun had freer access to the interiors than in Egypt. But it is to be remembered that in worship the ancients of South America secured seclusion by means of height and which the pyramidal buildings offered. Seclusion by height had advocates in the Orient; but the sentiment is observable in later annals of temple building when the custom obtained of erecting temples upon eminences overlooking their environment. This sentiment is shown in the selection of the locality for the Parthenon in Athens. But if no eminence was obtainable the building itself was raised, by which means it might tower above all adjacent structures. And it is of interest to note that the Talmud specially commands that the synagogue shall be erected upon a hill, this to be done in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah (ii. 2) that "the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the

Digitized by Google

hills." The Jewish rabbis have regarded this prophecy of such imperious influence that they claimed that any city in which the houses towered above the synagogue ultimately would be destroyed. "A parallelogram[1] in shape, the basilica form of structure suggested possibilities that were incentive to various changes. The first basilica (Basilica Porcia, 82 B. C.) was a place of market and exchange, the most perfect of which is yet to be seen at Pompeii (Trajan's Basilica). This style of structure remained without modifications until adopted by the Christians for a place of worship, the basilica then becoming in course of various changes an oblong hall divided by rows of columns into a wide central nave and lower side aisles over which in some cases was placed a gallery. The central space was lighted by windows in the upper part of its side walls (the clerestory of Gothic buildings). An example of the Christian basilica, that of St. Paul, Rome, represents very adequately the later development of the original form and which is of peculiar interest in this connection. Prefixed

[1] See *Masks, Heads, and Faces*, on the antiquity of this form.

Digitized by Google

to the oblong space of this church is a porch (the narthex), to which alone the neophytes and penitents were admitted, a new feature in the construction, but which suggests the old sentiment of reserve and avoidance of publicity. But this was not sufficient; other discriminations and reserves were therefore obtained through an extension at the rear and east end of the building where was built a cross wall containing in the centre an arched way which led into the transept effected by the cross wall. And the space so provided was occupied at service by the clergy, for here was the bishop's throne. An altar stood between this place of distinction and that arranged for the people in the hall. Under this altar was a crypt containing in most cases the body of the saint to whom the building had been dedicated.

Thus it is observed that together with this *apse* at the east and the *narthex* at the west, there yet remained the old tradition of interdiction and unapproachableness as also observance of the movements of the sun.

This building is representative, and may be regarded as prototype of the simpler churches of the New England village, where

Digitized by Google

the gallery, windows, the raised platform and pulpit in the rear, together with a vestibule at the entrance, are examples of methods of construction determined by the early Christians in their modification of the Roman basilica. The New England church demanded light, and hence the two rows of windows at side of the oblong hall; — dim light was not desirable to the Puritan and Pilgrim, to whom seclusion often suggested hiding from justice.

But if the simpler structures of worship of to-day trace their lineage from modifications of the Roman basilica, so may the more elaborate forms, — the Romanesque building is a descendant in the same line, and it is the Roman builder's introduction of the arch first applied by the Etruscans to the construction of drains, bridges, and aqueducts that made possible those changes in the interior of the basilica wherein was provided greater space without incumbering the floor. The arch was known to the Egyptians and Greeks, but it was applied after the manner of the Etruscans, and never promoted to the use to which it was applied by the Roman Christians. It came into ecclesiastical architec-

Digitized by Google

ture by demand for space and a new-born desire for light. As a provision for light the arches were carried by columns on each side of the nave to a sufficient height to clear the roofs of the side-aisles and admit windows to light the central nave.

The arch in this useful capacity does not fail, however, of expression in harmony with the sentiment that demanded space and light, for the movement of the line is more blithesome than the spring of Atalanta's instep; it is expressive of both buoyancy and an invitation to enter. When spanning the full current of the Tiber it gave but a hint of its possibilities, for, when introduced into church architecture, beneath it multitudes of men passed and repassed, the full tide of humanity observant of the sentiment of consecration which distinguishes the human spirit.

The Romanesque style of plain vaulting had many modifications: from it springs the Byzantine which is characterized by the dome. This curious adaptation of the vault, unless most happily proportioned as in case of St. Peter's dome, as a means of expression is not as desirable as the spire; it is too often suggestive of obtuseness where should reign

Digitized by Google

aspiration; like the use of the thumb in place of the index finger, it fails of demonstration. Of necessity contracted in size, it may not exceed a miniature beauty contrasted to the immeasurable vault of the sky. A city of domes is too like a knoll of mushrooms highly accentuated, and when compared with a city of spires it loses by contrast, as in martial pomp painted warriors bearing clubs are less effective than soldiers armed with spears.

But Byzantine and the Romanesque are initiatory to a form of building which exceeds each in the development of expression: Gothic architecture, having its roots deep in the primary processes which demanding consecration had induced the primitive structure of boughs, earth, or stone, has a breadth of expression that can only be compared to the expansive powers of the human intellect, whence is its growth and initiation. And the history of Gothic architecture is similar to that of painting and music, for it is the French builder on the Rhine who seized upon the Romanesque and enthusiastically carried it to such marvelous perfection, his countrymen constructing in rapid succession the cathedrals of Paris, Amiens, Rouen, and the rest. And

Digitized by Google

after the French the English add new features, so showing that, as music, architecture is impressed by racial characteristics; for notwithstanding its introduction into England by the Normans (1066), the English followed out notions of their own which are always imperious if more restful than their neighbors' across the Channel. The English cathedral suggests solidity, the French grace and directness as also compactness and finish, the two styles specialized in the form of the apse, which with the English terminates squarely and with rigor of decision, while the French is circular, as when the extension was introduced into the Roman basilica. And the French cathedral emphasizes height, while the English suggests mass demanding room.

But all Gothic architecture is characterized by qualities that are interpretive of ideals that have found expression by means of ethical progress. In mass, proportion, thrust, arch, space, and support there may be read the evolution of the builder's skill, but also the successive demand of the human spirit for opportunity for expression and self-manifestation through visualized form.

The perpendicular and horizontal lines

Digitized by Google

prominent in the temples of Egypt and Greece are representative of calmness and enduring strength, for the ancients constructed their buildings without appreciation of lightness. As an expression of aspiration, the arch, opposed to their idea of fixedness, was used but as a bearer of burdens, a resistant power to superincumbent weight. In Italy, as in Greece and Egypt, the Trabeate style was used until Christianity demanded room for the multitude, whose needs, desires, and woes were believed to be of special interest to the divinity whom the Founder of the New Era had manifested. The introduction of the arch marked an era in the growth of the human spirit; it also expressed the sentiment of welcome, entrance undebarred.

The altar of the arcuated structure was object of the decorative skill of the noble women of Rome, access to its steps undenied. The urgency of sentiment that was instigation of the votary cup or the meal bowl fabricated by the brown and red women of the East and West respectively, and consecrated to divinity, penetrated the household of the pagan to its final dedication to the new service. Attractiveness of interiors were

Digitized by Google

invitation to worshipers, and finally there was scarcely a building site in Rome that was not secured for the new structure. And this impetus was felt in all parts of the world; the building instinct aroused, there was scarcely a city in Italy, Germany, and France but that had an example of Gothic architecture.

But the structure of Gothic architecture is marked by developments that show a distinct impress and serial growth.

Construction is experimental with man; the bee has her plan mapped out anteriorly, so also the ant; these builders, obedient to a law that lies deep in the chemics of crystals and plants, do not vary in their construction except by way of avoidance of obstacles, this declaring that obedience to be a conscious act.

The human spirit evolves its schemes tardily, and only at the instigation of an impulse which, though not more imperious, is derived from sentiments whose import is related to psychic development. For the history of architecture begins when the human spirit recognized its kinship to the unseen forces, and sought their alliance.

Digitized by Google

When there was but the woodland with its overarching branches and the vaulted cavern in the breast of the mountain wherein there was retreat, nature enforced lessons of form-making by her numerous army of builders whose decorations ever followed construction, and whose proportion and mass never exceeded but always responded to demand. But these lessons, as lessons in harmony by means of the winged choristers, were not learned for long ages, and then only when the democratic doctrine of mutualism was enforced through the doctrine of the Founder of Christianity whose tenet of mutualism, — practiced by lower forms of animate life, — nature's leash applied to ferocity of instincts, — demanded the expanded aisles and the vault for a common consecration and neighborly communion.

And yet the new structure did not abolish old sentiments: the ceremonial and the object lesson at the altar together with the early and primitive form of appeal remained (which its concerted dance expressed), and the two great divisions of architecture, the Gothic and Trabeate, are each monuments of the majestic current of primitive though advan-

Digitized by Google

cing apprehension of the immanence of divinity in man, and this exclusive of racial or indeed personal limitations, these accentuating the universality of Spirit. For man is divine, and a creator, inasmuch as he actualizes sentiment and embodies ideas, — the serious result of which in moulding civilization is but faintly outlined in the history of national life, although it may be observed that as far back as the days when the Osirian Fête was celebrated upon the Nile a peculiar vein of seriousness entered into the hymns sung on the occasion; the joyousness of the primitive dance ceremonials at the annual vernal resurrection relapsing into greater thoughtfulness, the result of a higher intellectualism. And later this tendency shows itself among the Hellenes, that "blitheness" which pervaded the Pan Athenaic Fêtes succeeded by reflection and profound questioning at the gates of Life. The grip and stress of self-development give an austerity to the human spirit, and it may be imagined that the unadorned shrine, if encircled by columns like shafts of light, was typical of the Hellenic mind. Apollo, failing to strike his lute, waits as the devotee might at the steps of his

Digitized by Google

temple, for vagaries filled the human spirit and beautiful imaginings, these but stray winds upon the strings of the celestial lute, not the touch of the divine hand of the god of light.

Perpetuity by means of solidity is one of the primary ideas in the construction of the temple, wherefore the stone in place of the wooden structure in the Trabeate style of architecture, while the idea is definitely suggested by mass and sufficient support, low walls and needful adjustment of parts.

Thus form and substance embodied an idea, — that idea so insistent that temple and tomb in Egypt manifested its importance, nay, more, the method of burial declared its weight with overwhelming proof. Human nature did not differ from plant and animate life in this idea, however, but in a special solicitude for personal perpetuity. It was not from intention to insure continuity of existence, indeed, that set this ingenuous people to preserving the body of the dead, the principle of life forbidding the possibility of extinction. They had long known the perpetuity of existence — intuitionally, an intuition that makes it more difficult for

Digitized by Google

the human mind to entertain the idea of discontinuance than continuance and with all the appearances to the contrary, so far as objective cognition is concerned. Death in fact is inconceivable to mind, nor can we find the word in science, as also it was not conceived by ignorance.

The childlike method resorted to in Egypt to preserve the dead was a similar device to the substitution of pictured foods for the regalement of the dead in place of actual food offerings. In both cases the method was mimetic and depended on what was deemed the spiritual being supposed to be attached like a shadow to all substances, which if animistic is not far from a very idealistic notion. The ancient view that the dead have no shadow is a proof of similar idealism, as also of realism, for believed to belong to the court of the suns of heaven, they were bodies of light and without shadow.

In these views, though seemingly far afield from the subject of temple building, there is the same looking toward perpetuity, a desire for permanence in that which is familiar or which is expressive of an ideal. The evanescent and temporary does not appeal to the

Digitized by Google

human spirit; it craves the constant and imperishable. And, moreover, the present is inadequate except it be prophetic of the future. Our ideals are upon the steps of eternity; eager seraphs of the soul, they crowd the gates of the unseen awaiting their lifting to let the winged glories pass through.

But these ideals are interdependent, their very development secured by the law of commensality which is common to all organic life. Vainly is sought the least form of life that is not obedient to either commensality or mutualism, if in the least these laws of life are dominant in the greatest, from the former serially up to the latter they have sway. Mutualism does not appear, however, in the outward appearance of things, for nature is armed cap-a-pie with subtilty, having wit to woo, to capture, and dine. But before higher courts she is not criminal, for there is knightliness among beasts; a Saint Bernard will defend a spaniel at odds with a bulldog! And have we not seen how is practiced mutualism among the polypier, notice being given of danger, and when as if by common consent the whole family masquerade as a budded plant, each hydra as inanimate as a

Digitized by Google

helical plant asleep in shade? These gregarious children of the deep through the branching of a collective stem and tufted shoots of brilliantly colored hydras are living illustration of neighborly love. By mutual aid mutual benefit is obtained, sagely asserted Homer, while singing of war among men, and in nature what is practiced under the waters is done above and beyond; the birds who swim and dive are not brigands who seek to circumvent but carry out the law, a fine adjustment regulating the birds of prey over sea and on land, some vantage ever given to the less warlike, — subtilty opposed to valor. And the adjustment of the scales of justice is occasion of strange partnership, — the shark and pilot-fish, the alligator and the bird finding mutual benefit by an alliance of forces, these like the hermit crab and sea anemones maintaining comfortable existence. And this mutual compact and interdependence develop warm friendships as also valiant defenders, the weakness of one animal bringing out the courage of another, no true lion attacking a mother with her offspring, though in the natural order his legitimate prey.

The law of mutualism as of commensalism

Digitized by Google

is constructive, it is balance and proportion and the means of perpetuity. The equal balances held among the lower organisms by means of mutualism is like the law of equilibrium in the solar realm, stellar groups maintained in complete integrity through centripetal and centrifugal forces. All poise in structure depends on a like associated impulse of integral parts, and hence the wise calculation of the builder, divine or human.

To complete a structure in which the fusion of detail affords a concrete expression, there is necessity for neighborly accommodation, a loan of strength and a diffusion of weight while as in the organic world differentiation is a means of mutual gain. In obedience to these conditions Gothic architecture assumes a representative place in the history of form-making, and in its highest examples it contrasts with the highest form of the Trabeate style by a wider inclusion of those symbols which were indented upon the plastic clay of the votive cup and later inwoven in the ceremonial rug, then incised upon stone, first the labor of women whose unsinewy frame developed a subtile mentality in obedience to the law of compensation, and

Digitized by Google

hence the appropriateness of the name Notre Dame of the principal example of Gothic temples, even though there had been no other reason for its application. For the woman was first to consecrate to divinity the decorative instinct inherited from the animate and inanimate world.

Gothic architecture is an epitome of nature's laws in form-making consecrated by human nature, and through support, reach, thrust, and curve, interlacement, clearance of space, and multitudinous ascensions of line from floor to ceiling, a mutual movement is maintained that, suggesting harmony of purpose with buoyancy of feeling, assumes the form of a grandly completed organism whose voice could alone be music.

But the Gothic in its varied development is like natural phenomena, its multitudinous ensemble of symbols an organism like the human body replete with inherited power, its varied functions expression of a series of aspirations which crowd upon the imagination. And hence the limitation of its greatness, requiring a knowledge of the history of the evolution of the human spirit that comprehends the first expression of consecration

Digitized by Google

to the ideal, to the latest aspiration thereto, it is yet to be fully interpreted. It may be compared to the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which is a compilation of ideas of centuries of symbolists, beginning with the ideograph upon the votive offering and ending with the epitaph on the tomb. But these difficulties do not oppose themselves to the student of the Trabeate form of architecture for it is nearly the simplest that could be devised; as truly an organism as the Gothic, its functions are without complexity, their purpose apparent and in most cases frankly confessed. But while the temple of the Greeks argues singleness of idea, and little disposition toward the more complex expression of aspiration, simplicity ends here. The shrine of the Delphic temple, as indeed the entablature of the Parthenon, was thronged with images. These are as representative of sacred visions as the scriptural pictures upon the Roman Basilica. And the Greeks not only consecrated their statues of the gods but their athletes, their Olympic Games dedicated to Zeus, the period of this festival denominated God's Peace.

It is of interest to note in this connection

Digitized by Google

how constant the Greeks remained to ancient traditions, for primitive festivals were conducted under the avowed auspices of a tutelar deity whose presence was insured by the representation of the deity either by emblem or statue. And it is doubtless due to the antiquity of this custom, generations of artists devoted to the production of these images, that Greek skill culminated in the production of the celebrated Olympic Zeus, by Phidias, a prodigy of such majestic proportions that it was claimed that should the Father-of-All rise he would unroof the temple!

It was to this statue ovations were offered in the Olympic Games, — to this impersonation of Zeus the victorious athlete paid his tribute together with the gay Greek world, and it was at the period of these games when Praxiteles, doubtless, presented with glowing pride his statue of Hermes.

Praxiteles's genius illustrates the joyous side of the Greek character. After the seriousness of Phidias it means what the columns added to the original temple meant, a sentiment for the blitheness of nature prevailing; it might be said that Phidias's genius person-

Digitized by Google

ifies the intellectualism of the Hellenes, while Praxiteles discloses their buoyancy, hence the production by the latter artist of Hermes, a statue modeled upon the typical athlete; the close locks, suave, yielding mouth, nose in high relief but flexible as that of the lion — not aquiline — not vulpine, but a combination of lines summarizing the human perceptive powers, and so, well knitted to an unintellectual and feminine brow, lineaments all suggesting gentle instincts. The masculine head is high at the crown, a curled and fretted crest to the wave-like breadth of shoulder, while the deep human-lidded eyes emphasize the general address of the whole form toward the child, whom in a moment of repose the model athlete has, it may be, idly picked up — possibly a little brother, an urchin well beloved and of promise. Modeled upon the living athlete, how immediate the impression of some hidden allusion to sacred story! The insensate marble betrays the athlete's power to vault through the air, spurning the earth, so supple seem the muscles unweighted by the much hindering flesh. There is no demand for the winged cap, the winged foot, and the cadu-

Digitized by Google

ceus of the conventionalized form of Mercury; all is related in the spring and turn of the athletic limbs, the breadth of shoulders suggesting the eagle's charge upon the air and final light descent to the earth. And the urchin clings to the athlete like a young vine to the knot of a tree, so declaring himself Dionysus, the young god of wine. Hermes looks gently upon the divine child, that young god of the invisible fires of spring which lying perdu within the earth finally spring forth in a marvel of clustered fruit.

A messenger from Zeus, Hermes is, indeed, a fitting type of the athletic victor in the sacred interim of God's Peace, and in this fact there is a world of suggestion. For does it not appear that a Greek gymnast must needs be godlike? must possess the elements of manliness, — of dignity and self-respect? The matchless beauty of the form of the athlete demanded qualities which make the hero, and when, locking arms as the gentle and sinless animals of the field lock horns, testing their ability to become leader and defender of the herd, the Greek athlete wrestled, patient, persistent, impas-

Digitized by Google

sioned, and candid, — no ignoble sleight of hand, no mean advantage, but all in an integrity of spirit, in the full blaze of the face of Zeus sitting beneath the canopy of the Temple as beneath the roof of the sky. The consecration of the Olympic games, as of the toils of authorship, prizes won in either case, illustrates that religious tendency of the Hellenes of which St. Paul speaks. Moreover, it is this dedication of both the energies of the mind and body to the Father-over-All that gave that refinement to Greek art which has been the despair of the world, a refinement, it may be said here, that demanded a shrine for the nude figure, — even the gymnast victor's statue having place within the consecrated gymnasia. And as these statues were thus inclosed within dedicated areas, it it is in the nature of events that they were held sacred. Hence the final disposition of these statues, first by the spoilers of Athens, of Imperial Rome, and later those modern despoilers of Western Europe, appear most barbarous and vulgar.

The consecration of an object marks its worth. The consecration which bade the offering cup of the Sicilian Greek, or the

Digitized by Google

meal-bowl of the Pueblo Indian, as the Cellini vase,[1] the Phidian Zeus in Delphic Temple, and the Praxiteles Hermes in the temple of Hera, distinguishes the value of each object from the equally perfect work of animate life.

Consecration is an appeal to that ideal which is a summary of the soul's ideals, — an appeal to the Over-Soul, creator and source of the true, beautiful, and good. The swallow's nest, slightly cruder than the terra-cotta cup of the primitive woman, itself moulded from clay, is differentiated by means of the feeling which prompted their invention; in the one is recognized a self-helpfulness and efficiency that sharpened the bill, whetted the gleam of the eager, unabashed eye, the whole attitude an epitome of the survival of the fittest. In the other, through its purpose of appeal, is found self-sacrifice, aspiration, and love. Æsthetic tendencies, of which Greek art is a phenomenal illustration, are discoverable in lower animate life, but their influence does not bear the possessor of these tendencies out of self-consciousness. There is susceptibility to beauty, but there is not adoration.

[1] Mentioned in Cellini's biography.

Digitized by Google

The bower-bird erects an arch by arrangement of boughs and sticks, upon which is laid bright objects for a decorative effect, a plateau then is cleared, this adorned with whatever will shine in the sun; and this accomplished, the lover invites his mistress to enter his temple of love, his egress and ingress beneath the arch an illustration of the adaptitude of the device for feminine pleasuring prior to the duties of wedlock. An example of art for utilitarian purposes, the wisdom of the bower-bird assumes the aspect of self-interest, and it is impossible not to regard him as something of a coxcomb, attractive as he is. The leafy arch is not consecrated to beauty for beauty's sake, its invention is a subtile device of capture similar to the leafy temple of primeval man, and there was a long ascent to the application of the arch to the Roman temple, — if this act also included self-interest. Difficult indeed the ascent to the point where beauty is its own excuse for being.

Digitized by Google

III

ART; OLD USAGES AND NEW DEMANDS

THE human spirit's inherent love for the true, beautiful, and good is shown by the immediate application of inventive power to the expression of the ideal when the needs of physical life are provided for, an application which is attested in the annals of civilization, these annals, as in the history of Egypt, for example, displaying a growing tendency to subordinate the needs of physical life to the contemplation of the ideal, a tendency exemplified by those permanent monuments that once adorned the Delta of the Nile, the transient habitations of the people long since fallen into decay — the one constructed of stone, the other of clay.

And it is in Egypt's record is found proof of the acceleration of that productivity which is trait of the human spirit as of lower animate life, and which was exerted in the invention of ornate objects, grotesque or

Digitized by Google

delicate, massive or fragile, these objects consecrated to sentiments characteristic of the human soul alone. Proof of productivity, this superabundance of ornate objects suggests also that reproduction, if shown in animate life, is psychic in origin and import, while also showing how great the craving of the human spirit for skill to manifest the ideal, — love of beauty its impetus and guide.

But though typical, since her annals include a civilization of four thousand years, Egypt is not a unique example of the tendencies of the human spirit, for all nations, Oriental and Occidental alike, through their accumulated treasure of ornate objects, testify to their existence, these nations, as individuals, seeking the expression of the æsthetic and ideal when setting up their lares, and when the mere necessities of physical life were provided for. It might be said indeed, so universal is the invention of the ornate, that the human brain is a means of exit for ideals which throng the realm whence the multitudinous shapes of natural phenomena, these opening an avenue to divinity with its host the true, beautiful, and good. But

Digitized by Google

though the human brain seems to be a passive instrument and a wide gateway to the crowding ideals, it is subject to circumstance, its portals being narrowed by environment, hence the slow advance in expression of the intrinsically beautiful, the deterrent influence of rigorous formulas or stultifying conventionality holding back the shining host seeking exit from the unseen into visible form, a condition peculiarly exemplified in the annals of Egypt, where art, arriving at some degree of expression, becomes in a measure petrified by conventionality.

But if influenced by environment, and the mind is like a lake reflecting the movements and changes of the clouds, these aerial bodies at one time fretted by the winds throwing across the blue gigantic swan's wings, — or at era of storms forming the primeval grotesque, fantastic monsters that are here and there copied on wood and stone, — it is not long subject to it, for out of these shapes are framed new visions electrified, as it were, by sentiment, these the expression of the emotions of the soul, — expressions that have their place alone in the empire of the ideal, ugliness and attractiveness acting on the hu-

Digitized by Google

man spirit much as repulsion and gravitation act on elemental nature, so impelling it to the choice of the beautiful rather than the unseemly. The development of the human spirit indeed is like the development of organic bodies, modification and variation an event of growth and a new evolution, and therefore its career may be illustrated by a single function, as, for instance, the eye, the gem-like organ of visuality of the hydrozoa a starting-point, so to speak, for the evolution of the complete visual organ of man; and thus also the experimental stage of the human spirit in art and invention may be likened to the primal stage of animate life when crude organisms were mere suggestions of later and more complete structures.

And this likeness is not in parallel development alone, but also in a persistent aim to combine beauty with utility, and which is equally apparent in the course of the evolution of form among organic bodies as in development of delineation in art. Hence, since nature and human nature both aspire to express the beautiful, and ugliness is repulsive to each, it happens that the latter is shoved to one side, and the former empha-

Digitized by Google

sized in the course of variation and modification; and so universally does this transpire, indeed, that this custom appears in the conduct of life, — for when man or animal through accident or enmity is robbed of attractiveness of appearance each betrays a certain shamefacedness before his fellows, while on the other hand both emphasize their attractive points, this noticeable when the insect trims itself for conquest or when man adorns himself for like purpose.

These habits disclosing the reign of beauty in domain of elemental nature are specially an unwitting acknowledgment of the law of attraction which underlies all formulation or productivity. Attractiveness, indeed, is another name for beauty, while ugliness is synonymous with repulsion, forces which are means of both variation and development, whence under the rein of a cosmic force ensues structural completeness as in the case of that mould of circumstance, "the image of God," and also the evolutions of the human spirit within the mould, and whose delight in beauty is the leash of the cosmic force, active in realms of spirit and matter alike, urging development.

Digitized by Google

This cosmic force, under whose leash all development is instigated, might be said to drive tandem repulsion and gravitation (ugliness and beauty), the two steeds hitched to a star of destiny — that destiny completeness of structure, physical and spiritual. And in this view, wherein the inseparable relations of spirit and matter are suggested, comparisons drawn from nature to illustrate the traits of human nature appear in their true aspect, one force overruling both. It is owing to this common rule that the human spirit in being invisible may be compared to those invisible organisms in air, sea, or on land, moreover, being in the course of development as are those invisible organisms, its variations and modifications are learned only as in their case, by results. And these results are the theme of history, for in human civilization there is an evidence of the development as also the productivity of the human spirit, this development marked by cycles whose course is spiral, for though apparently there are periods of retrogression, these are but an eclipse in course of an upward evolution, — the shadow of a star, so to speak, on the way of progress, — humanity borne steadily for-

Digitized by Google

ward under the leash of cosmic force, which continues to impel the most lethargic step, for it is the

> "Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

An Egyptian poet, whose name is lost in oblivion of the past, represents the human spirit toiling up a ladder which extends between heaven and earth. At the summit is Isis and her sister Nephtys, divine mothers, and guardians of the new-born soul, and these two divinities reach forth helpful hands to the climbing mortal, toiling upward round by round. An allegory, whose key is in the language of correspondence used in original application of pictographic writing to alphabetic form, this picture serves as an illustration of the mutual attitude of beauty and the human soul — the spirit of beauty at the summit of all progress, the triumphs of aspiration marked by ascending steps each of which are seen only when shown in the continuance of human progress, though each step is prophetic of the one following by being identified with some new concept through advance of knowledge that comes of experience in the truths of nature.

Digitized by Google

Each cycle offers a new vantage point, indeed, and this is illustrated particularly in the history of the arts, as, for example, the annals of painting, the first examples drawn from early Christian, and so continuing through to the High Renaissant period, these annals including the names of artists remarkable for their influence in the evolution of expression, each artist improving the method of his predecessor, as is testified in the works of Cimabue, Giotto, Orcagna, Fra Angelico, of the Gothic period (1250–1400); Masolino, Masaccio, Fra Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Lippi (Filippino), Cosimo, Signorelli, of the Early Renaissance (1383–1447); following whom appeared Leonardo, Fra Bartolommeo, Michael Angelo, Andrea del Sarto, Perugino, Raphael, Titian, and numerous others of the High Renaissance (1500–1600), these artists at the apex of development as also at the declination, for loosening the bonds of ecclesiasticism which held sway in the Gothic period, this was a period of license in expression, as also it was the humanist period, so to speak, human nature dominant, for in the long roll of distinguished names few may be designated as

Digitized by Google

having been inspired by the beauty of natural phenomena, the interpretation of which is the special province of landscape art.

It is true there are evidences of impressions gained from animate and inanimate forms of life at a comparatively early period of Italian pictorial art that disclose some consciousness of their concomitance with human life, — as in the case of Giotto, for example, who had some notion of the value of a sympathetic background, sometimes, indeed, crowding his spaces with lower animate life, although like his master Cimabue he was in a degree in bondage to the prevalent egotism of the time which excluded nature as of slight interest. A shepherd boy, and nourished among the idylls of nature which Dante — whilom his companion in Cimabue's studio — so inimitably describes, Giotto's want of sympathy with these themes might give rise to the charge that painting in comparison with literature is but an imitative art, objective, and without sentiment, for when Giotto was inditing his slow apprehensions in color, Virgil and Dante's verses echoed throughout Italy, and to field, mountain, and stream a beauty was imparted that is born alone of the

Digitized by Google

human spirit. But it is due to Giotto, as also to Cimabue before him, that the strait-jacket of Byzantine art was loosened, hence it may be inferred something of the spirit of nature — its romance and poetry — was in his soul. Possibly to these feelings is due his crowded backgrounds, the tendency to which suggests Dickens's crowded page, brimming, as one might say, with shoals of men and women diverse by a variant fin only.

And Giotto's recapitulary backgrounds established a precedent as did Dickens's crowded page, for Fra Angelico seems equally to abhor a vacuum, his spaces filled to an excess, though more attractively than were Giotto's, there being a host of exquisite saints at every available point whose gentle gayety on occasion is expressed in a dance so unaccentuated that not a hem of raiment flies up, the movement of each nymph-like form like the sway of palms lulled by gentle zephyrs.

The Gothic period in Italian art, typified in Giotto's works, conveys a notion that affluence of objects gives value to the picture; early paintings, indeed, were like the parlors of the *nouveau* rich, a bazaar of heterogeneous furnishings.

Digitized by Google

Nor did this method pass into disuse in the Early Renaissance. Benozzo Gozzoli, while improving the style of portraiture and figure-drawing of Giotto's period, added to his theme a medley of trees, vines, fruits, flowers, cattle, deer, hares, dogs, and birds as if, indeed, he were telling off like an Egyptian scribe the sacrificial offerings of a Pharaoh. And these multitudinous objects have no recognizable meaning so far as the subject of the picture is concerned, the merit lying only in skill of presentation, which was, it must be acknowledged, very considerable for the period; beside, did not the continuation of study in lower animate life and persistence in giving some importance to the background of a picture, this being a movement in the line of nature studies, eventually give rise to landscape art?

Furthermore, in these packed spaces of Giotto and Gozzoli's pictures some expression of the beauty in the phenomena of natural life may have been intended as in primitive verse where the simple enumeration of animate objects was a sufficient praise, a notion that our democratic poet Whitman assumes, his enumeration carried to such excess

Digitized by Google

that the mouth becomes packed with words as with pebbles, provocative of stammering instead of a preventive. But if Gozzoli testifies a kindling understanding of nature he is no landscapist, for his theme is human nature, his studies from "real life," — that is, human life, — and of such excellence he was given the title of the Florentine Holbein, the latter artist's skill in characterization attributed to his sympathetic portraiture of the human face, and deservedly, when it is considered how tardy the appreciation of the fact that in facial lineaments the soul's state is recorded, the skill of presentation beginning with Cimabue, who, discarding the staring eyes of Byzantine faces, effects a semi-humanistic look by means of long, narrow eyes, these, however, suggestive of a hypnotic state, though the nearness of these organs of visuality is somewhat contradictory to entire obsession of a supernatural force, giving a foxy look, an expression that is not so marked in Giotto's faces. For Giotto was given to realism, this manifested by a combination of figures of saints and shepherds together with servants and domestic animals most satisfactory to the *amour*

Digitized by Google

propre of the Roman populace, whose religious views included the flattering hope that the future life offered companionships to the poor unattainable to the rich, an idea well borne out if the sturdy short bodies of Giotto's saints, small heads, and massive chins, together with the Cimabue eye, were a trustworthy characterization. Giotto possessed an unelastic imagination in those matters wherein art should lead to insight of truth — a saint consisted of raiment and crown, and this given the lineaments seem to have obeyed an impulse to caricature, the sinister eyes approaching the line of the nose suggesting an evil temper, an expression the more apparent when contrasted with Fra Angelico's work, of whom it has been stated that an attempt at representation of evil ended in a comical failure, — so showing that what is in the soul comes forth upon the artist's canvas, he being helpless in the hand of the law which holds matter obedient to spirit. Fra Angelico was successor to Orcagna, whose pictures are full of tenderness of feeling even to timidity, his reverence impeding force of expression as no wise happened in Giotto's works. And his reverence

Digitized by Google

prepares us to anticipate a new development in which sterile realism at some period must be subordinated to idealism.

Reverence does not storm the citadel of the hosts of divine beauty, — it awaits their coming in an attitude of aspiration as a Fra Angelico kneeling in his cell. Orcagna perceived the impress of a mysterious entity in man which, within the physical envelope, governs its shape as the hand the glove, and his thoughts determined by love of sweetness and light, the uncanny trick of the eyes represented by his predecessor is impossible to his faces, — and together with Fra Angelico the artist seems to be inspired as by a sphere of human faces, as was Raphael, these like the petals of Dante's rose radiating from the holy centre of divinity an inspiration like that which fires the imagination of the poet, hence those delicate shapes in soft, harmonious color in the Santa Maria Novella (Florence) that seem ready to elude the public gaze, evanescent gleams of the land of dreams. An effect observed when compared with the works of Correggio, whose pictures have a physical charm, — representing motion with tranquillity, a grace

Digitized by Google

that is approachable, the flesh shadows transparent, a revelation of rose-tints, — they are a typical presentation of an organism in perfect accord with nature, content with the simple delight and joy of existence; an Eve, elemental and pure!

Orcagna prophesied a Botticelli, the master genius in the dreamland of saints. Botticelli's figures have that curious effect of movement without rash disturbance of draperies that is presented in Fra Angelico's pictures. His, however, was a warmer nature. A certain intuition of the fact that spirit compels form and that substance is its place of nativity is represented by his interpretations. He has substituted for the ascetic mouth characteristic of Cimabue and Giotto's faces, full emotional lips, — in modern art a trait in Burne-Jones's ideals, and exaggerated in Rossetti's, the lips a little too unctuous for right delicacy of emotion, — an effect nowise apparent in the Botticelli, — the one, in fact, a dream of fair women, the other a vision of sweet saints.

Demand for more space followed the acquired skill in expression of emotion through the lineaments of the face, and hence it hap-

Digitized by Google

pened that the crowded background, filled with animate and inanimate objects drawn from nature was discarded, — a result which would have well-nigh extinguished the incipient landscape art had it not happened that mythological subjects, treated at the same period, demanded the open air and a view of nature of which these subjects were an impersonation. Among these pictures those of Piero Cosimo are the more marked for a growing interest in landscape studies. And Cosimo may be said, indeed, to be usher to Titian, the one landscapist of the Early Renaissance, whose intuitions so far exceeded his compeers in this direction that he won the name of the founder of landscape art, sweeping away all prior claim by pictures of natural scenery divested of interest gained by the introduction of the human figure.

Titian's boyhood was spent in the country as was Giotto's, but much progress had been made between the two periods with which these two artists were identified (1276–1386, 1477–1576), for Titian was no background recapitulist, but a nature lover. His biography relates how that, notwithstanding he had made his home in the midst of all the

Digitized by Google

attractiveness natural and artificial of Venice, he made frequent journeys to Cadore, place of his birth, the treasured result of which is those sketches and paintings of groups of mountains justly held as witness to a rare genius, for it is a representative nature which is quick with impression in youth, independent of guide or fostering hand. And yet more unusual if those impressions are retained to such purpose.

But it is not in the sketches of mountain and cloud that Titian gives an evidence of his tractability to the phenomena of nature, but in a bold, unhesitating handling of his themes, detail wisely subordinated to general effect. Here is a reminiscence of the grand strength of the mountains, their unhalting lines amid the roll and swirl of clouds, — and moreover it may be said that Titian's individuality lies in an unhesitating sweep of line rather than in the splendor of his color, for his fellow pupil in Bellini's studio, Giorgione, so manifestly rivals him in luminosity of tint it might well be said that "Titian's color looks as if lighted from without, Giorgione's as if lighted from within."

And aptness in use of color as exhibited in

Digitized by Google

Titian's pictures represents an imagination less exalted than inebriated, led by the physical aspect of natural beauty.

Titian doubtless found it necessary to visit those Friulian Alps, scene of his boyish visions, to steady him after his intoxication in Venetian life and immediate influence of his fellow-student, Giorgione, that gorgeous orchid of the Adriatic.

The tendency of the Venetian school was a sumptuous sensuousness which, robbing art of its delicacy of sentiment, imbued it with a dangerous attraction. It is here appear those Venuses which would be better omitted from public galleries, fleshly, rose-like, but without the modesty of the rose. Marvels of execution, these pictures are an epitome of that divergence perceived in the evolution of Italian art which suggests the ripening of autumnal foliage, — gorgeous, but destined to decay, — the ideal in art threatened by an eclipse through lack of refinement in the artist.

It is noteworthy that Venice, itself so picturesque and full of color, was never an inviting theme to the Venetian artists, the modern artist alone comprehending its rare enchant-

Digitized by Google

ment, as it was left to Ruskin to discover the remarkable suggestiveness of the "Stones of Venice."

But how mention Ruskin unless also Turner, and, moreover, when speaking of Venice? It is due, certainly, to this English artist to note how quick his sensibilities to the beauty of the Queen of the Adriatic and how lavish the expression of surprised delight. The different attitudes of Titian, founder of landscape art, and Turner its exponent, disclose the great advance made in comprehensiveness of the possibilities of art as a means of expression from the period when Titian essayed to give an illustration of the influence of mountain scenery, and that when Turner drew attention to the phenomena of light and shade and their effect in nature.

In the two artists there had been kindled a similar love for nature, but the spirit of the one was uninformed, his impression unideal, his skill restricted, while that of the other, expanding under the stimulus of modern catholicity of sentiment, asserted the primacy of natural phenomena in moulding human nature, and bringing it into the temple of the beautiful, true, and good. And Titian's

Digitized by Google

limitations were the ear-marks of his time, partaking of the sentiment of the period when impersonation was demanded in representation of all objects, mountain, sea, or city, an heraldic device meaning more than that which could be gathered from a luminous pageant, if as in the case of Venice, of marble walls, towers, and minarets transfigured in the light of the sun, this device figuring a guardian spirit, the lares of human domain in whose protection there was security, — a protection believed to be particularly needed, for was not this city in the midst of the unstable sea? — surrounded by flowing waves if opposing a natural moat against besieging enemy, did it not invite the dangers lurking beneath their crest? The sea as viewed in Titian's time indeed offered little inspiration to the artist, for tradition held up a gobelin-like curtain between the vision of the human spirit and its majestic beauty, this curtain tapestried over by Hellenic myth and Italian story, tales of Argonautic adventures and of the exploits of the heroic Æneas, so giving rise to pictures of Circean dangers in the far horizon. And thus associated, the sea in the fancy of the timid landsmen was like an abyss

Digitized by Google

— a cleft in the earth filled in by a treacherous element whose inhabitants were a hostile crew, their displeasure excited. Here was Neptune together with Amphitrite and her Triton brood, and from these regions issued fell destroyers as recorded in the Laocoön. An idea of the sea which is tersely expressed by the red man who, walking on the shore of the broad Michigan, with a white man, a doubtful friend, exclaimed: "There dwells a Spirit; it springs out upon the man who speaks false!" This concept a witness to an intuition of the existence of the true in nature, demanding the good in human nature, betrays an unawakened sensibility to the beautiful, and through these limitations it came to pass that their mysteries, withheld from the understanding of men, — artistic expression slow to interpret as also science to explore, — the Great Waters were divinized, impersonated, but not beloved.

Was it not in remembrance of the sea's mystery that Leonardo da Vinci pictured upon its shores, whereto flow the lingering streams beyond, that figure which had so long filled his imagination, eluding its grasp when pencil in hand he sought to delineate

Digitized by Google

it, and which when at last Mona Lisa looked forth from the canvas has ever perplexed the world? Did he not remember Aphrodite, who sprang from its foam, and Circe, the terror of the Argonauts, twain goddesses winsome and dangerous both?

> "Mother, is this the darkness of the end,
> The shadow of death, and is that outer sea
> Infinite, imminent eternity?"

questions the poet,[1] the enigmatic image the theme of his matchless verse. But gazing outward this woman surely perceives neither death nor eternity in the land-encompassing sea, for, her hands placidly folded, as woman has waited in the doorway of her tent upon the Sahara, or in the cabin by the devouring waves on the bleak coast, she waits, helplessly, resignation her ministrant angel in the slowly passing hours. And sometime a child has stood leaning at her knee, looking wistfully up into the grave face with its maternal brow, firm and benignant, the child recognizant of some default, whence the impassive repose and unexpectant stillness. But the child belonged to a dead past. Endowed with the humanized subtilty of plants and

[1] Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Digitized by Google

the wisdom of birds, if maternal instincts blossomed in this woman's heart they have sown their seed and in turn are blossoming far a-field and well away from the shore where sits this at one time mother, for it is not the present but the past, labor and strife ended, that this impersonation of an inspired dream suggests; and subtile as a serpent, as swift in retreat as in attack, her mien brings up haunting reminiscences of the story of womanhood, for if the Tartar Mother of the plain Mona Lisa also might be a Roman Vesta, or indeed that Eve of the Garden, herself its ripe fruit, the unheroic Adam's temptation, suffering in that which has taken the hope out of life, her ideal exists no longer.

As a roseate sea-anemone, flung up on the rock, this woman's sensitiveness vibrates no more to the magnetic touch of the swaying waves of life; indifferent, experienced, helpless, disarmed, she smiles without derision, her native magnanimity regnant, as in noble natures when personal happiness is at end.

Leonardo's choice of environment, as a setting to this figure, product of his many years' meditation, is an evidence of as careful consideration as the figure itself, while it

Digitized by Google

shows this artist's comprehension of that secret correspondency between nature and human nature which is yet to be fuller understood and made the basis of interpretation in Western art.

That it had been the basis to imagery in literature long time prior to Leonardo or to Titian, the first to record natural beauty by itself, it is unnecessary to state. Hellenic lyrists, Roman poets, Hebraic bards, as also Egyptian, rehearse the beauty of natural phenomena, the latter's text a complete system of correspondence between nature and human nature, an incipient allegory illustrating their interdependence. And it is "the sweet-scented fruit time" that was sung by Greek and Latin poets more frequently than spring, the garden the scene of festivals and the inspirer of song. It is perhaps Theocritus's memorable orchard feast which inspired the later modern painter, his *eidullia* a one-act scene as necessary to a landscape picture, for not alone were Keats, Wordsworth, and Tennyson his followers in praise of nature, but those poets of the brush of the eighteenth century, Turner and Corot, these artists giving evidence of a love for open air, realizing

Digitized by Google

the charm of nature, a sensibility to which was for so long a period unevinced in Italian art, even a sympathetic background as tardy in painting as scenic attraction in Greek, or long after in Shakespearian plays, all environment a meretricious embellishment. This unconscious insensibility when art was rapidly gaining place as the exponent of the ideal among the Latins is particularly emphasized in the story of Adam and Eve, its scene a garden, and at "sweet-scented fruit time," as was the idyll of Theocritus, the Hebraic author disclosing such poetic instincts in place and time as to fire the imagination of those poets of the pen, Dante and Milton, as also to find echo in the refined nature of Fra Angelico, and those delicate-minded artists, his followers in simplicity of religious fervor; these artists, however, unable to interpret themes requiring both profound sentiment and balance of judgment as the subject here considered.

The description of the scene is familiar to all, and it is but necessary to recall the affluence of natural beauty suggested in the brief mention of the rivers whose ample flow surrounded the mythic garden on its four sides,

Digitized by Google

that no part should go unwatered ; that here also are sinless animals, fruit trees, and a vegetation suited to the needs of these animals (carnivora having no place in Paradise), to picture the surroundings of the hero and heroine, those two human beings, offspring of divinity who enacted a tragedy around which has gathered the myriad fancies of ancient and modern bards, but which has proved a pitfall in Christian art, and this because of the limitations of the theme as also limitation of skill.

At the period when figures of Adam and Eve were attempted skill in portraiture was of the most tentative kind, Gothic and even Early Renaissant art seldom portraying what may be strictly called a human face, — the unconscious mingling of animal and human lineaments, such as appear in heads of Zeus in the archaic period of Greek art, still governing the attempt, — art thus betraying that if man is the animal humanized, he was by no means the human animal divinized, for it was real life that the artist designed to depict, and this life inspired the half-human image. Exceptions there were when a human face looked forth from its crowded or open-air

Digitized by Google

environment that disclosed a vague conception of the quality of a human spirit whose final regnancy over the phenomena of form is obtained by that self-improvement which has gained an access of strength through the cumulative power of variation and modification in lower physical life, — but these exceptions proved the rule.

But without genius to apprehend the measure of meaning possible in the human face, were there not types of faces — like those presented in Greek sculptures — with wide frank eyes candidly observant and betokening the unreminiscence of the child, together with an incapacity to resist temptation, that might have been models to the artist who aspired to present the actors in this primeval drama? Suppose that he despaired of representing Adam and Eve when their faces wore traces of their fall, the artist should take for a model the child's face, would not that be a sufficient exponent?

But this was done, is answered, and the result is a censure on the development of man or his primeval condition, less flattering than the proposition attributed to Darwin, for the effect of the child face on the full-

Digitized by Google

grown adult is contradictory to experience, and therefore a travesty little becoming the theme. Indeed, these creations, inventions without idealization, are absurd enough to provoke the mirth of the incomparable pair themselves, and they were better banished — hidden from sight. And true of the Adams and Eves of Italian art, true in respect to the nude in all countries where art is defaced by disrobed humanity, the inane figures, our first parents, being leaders to a route of inanities as droll in civilization where clothing is a sign of sanity as a burlesque of Aristophanes.

In the modern nude through the anachronism of child face and adult body an illustration is given of the changed conditions resulting from intellectualization and consequent delicacy of perception of means whereby the ideal may be actualized. It attests that disrobement is contrary to the advancement of mentality, clothing being as much the sign of the evolution of the human species from a lower to a higher stage as the feathers of birds are an evidence of an evolution from the unwinged state acquired in the bird species.

But how improve on methods that gave to

Digitized by Google

the world those matchless white marbles of Hellas?

Each civilization must bear witness to itself, it is answered. In the period when Greek art was exponent of the ideal the human form was the expression of human nature, but in the new era the human face is an exponent of the human spirit in the act of evolving out of the bondage of the physical body. And this being so, since it is a canon of art that the accessory should be subordinate to the motive, the Hellenic nude is an impossible model to modern expression in art; for the face in the nude loses emphasis, and in consequence the artist is in the plight of the instrumentalist who in rendering a musical composition loses his theme through false accent. And the persistence with which the nude holds its place up to the present time as an expression of fine art is even more amazing than the persistence in those inaccurate presentations of music that drive distraction up through the aural avenues of sound into the soul, and for which there are but the two remedies, one to seek another planet or banish these would-be artists to the schoolroom.

Digitized by Google

It is in the schoolroom effigies are made indeed, and here is place for the nude, which should be for the pupil in art what the cadaver is to the student in medicine. Does the pupil wish to display technique, let him display it where the ideal is not aimed at but accuracy of imitation — mere copy! the delineation of a figure is at the basis and beginning of art, its meaning and the idea conveyed is its worth to the world, and this is equally true in matters appertaining to color.

It can be surmised that before the introduction of landscape art flesh-coloring was a means of display of skill as alluring as figure drawing, hence those examples among artists who were constantly engaged in inventing new colors and new modes of application, these to preserve the much coveted luminosity and brilliancy characterizing, for instance, both Giorgione and Titian's painting, the pupil through greater scope of imagination rivaling the master in composition, but always betraying a similar sense of color. Two influences indeed, as has been said, are evident in Titian's works: one, of the Friulian Alps, Nature his Alma Mater, and where his boyhood imagination was

Digitized by Google

engrafted with the majesty of line, as presented by mountainous regions; and the other when in his maturity he perceived the enchantment of color, as used by Giorgione. Hence, as said, Titian's breadth of expression, for he was both remarkable for delineation and color, a certain emphasis of stroke characterizing his pictures, as in Tribute Money, his Christ having a high-minded dignity which does not appear in the figures of the Christ prior to Titian's time, while the coloring is true and luminous as well.

This boldness of execution, result of early influences, is noticeable by comparison with the works of Raphael, this paragon of efficiency being always accurate and at the same time seldom forgetfully energetic, in what he reveals, — perhaps so engrossed in manipulation and treatment the force of his spirit is near being sapped.

Comparing Raphael with a higher authority than Titian, Michael Angelo, it is observed that while the latter presents an event, it is suggested that it is transpiring and unfinished, the "passing event" not the past, a virtue less applicable to many of Raphael's representations owing to the fact

Digitized by Google

of finish and detail. This limitation is yet more evident in comparing Raphael's work with Greek sculptures, for these, even without Michael Angelo's trick of absolutely unfinished work, suggest succession of movement, and it appears almost a deception of the eye that the figure is motionless.

Raphael, a master of line, color, and refined sentiment, also fails of imparting the impression of being borne completely out of self-consciousness, — hence the growling disdain of the passionate Michael Angelo, who no doubt in his soul called Raphael *finicky*, being suspicious that all this perfection of the paragon artist of the Madonna was on the verge of the decline of art, — that such work, indeed, belonged to genre art, and would end in being imitated by artisans, craftsmen, and china painters.

And in truth this master of technique was on the verge of the decline of art, Paul Veronese many years after precipitating the movement. Veronese was a calculator of effects to such nicety that conventional Rome was veritably visualized before its eyes, the sumptuous clothes-respecting *poseurs* in the palace or on the piazza presented with a flourish of

Digitized by Google

manner suggesting a Bulwer in literature, "the glass and fashion" of the time mirrored with inimitable grace. Paul Veronese's Marriage in Cana is indeed a picture of Roman life, and moreover of Italian art as it passed into the school of literalists reaching its decadence in 1600, two years after the death of Veronese, eighty years after Raphael. Decadence is sure to evolve if slowly when literalness enters the realm of art or self-conscious power, — and its precipitation, moreover, may be anticipated when ideals are made subservient: a Christ and a Madonna accessory to a Roman fête!

It is significant that color was subordinated to form as skill was acquired by the Greek sculptors, and it appears that when tints were applied they were demanded for harmony of effect, as in the case of the Parthenon frieze, — which in part was intended to be a realistic representation of the annual procession from the market-place to the Acropolis on the occasion of Athena's chief festival, and where varied draperies would, if colored, add greatly to the splendor of the illustration and also be in harmony with the statue of Athena, whose weight of golden

Digitized by Google

adornment had the effect of a glittering beacon to the mariner far out to sea, the height of the statue (thirty-eight feet) suggesting a tower of defense.

Embellishment by means of color, the polychromy practiced in Egypt, was adopted unsparingly in Greece when brilliancy of effect was desirable. Borrowing and perfecting the Trabeate style of architecture from Egypt, the color effects of the temples of the Egyptian were also imitated without doubt; the fastidious Greek, however, practiced some reserve in color in the consecrated image, and it does not appear that tinting the flesh became habitual as in Egyptian art. And it may be inferred that as the sculptures became more and more lifelike and less hierarchal than were the Egyptian images, it was perceived that the appliance of color accentuates the sensuous in art, often bearing away the judgment in an enthusiasm, like that excited by Strauss music, to use a modern illustration; and moreover it is inconceivable that an intelligent sense of the beautiful, which is a trait of the Greek mind, would permit the application of paint upon the luminous Pentelic marble, for instance, used by Praxiteles for the figure of Hermes.

Digitized by Google

But it must be remembered that the Hermes does not belong to the period when art was consecrated alone to sacred purposes, while the application of color to statues was rather common to that epoch; color indeed assumed an equal place with form when the Parthenon was built, the Greeks being heirs to a traditional symbolism in color. But they did not, like the Hebrew idealist, however, make it a vehicle of expression in lieu of form, so actualizing thought through tint, a practice that is origin of color symbolism used by the old masters of painting in Italy, when white was emblem of purity and innocence; red, of love, the creative power; blue, truth and constancy; yellow, goodness, faith, and fruitfulness; green, hope in immortality, victory; violet, love and truth, passion and suffering. And Greek reserve in tinting the flesh of the nude statue is an illustration of the delicate taste that was so emphasized a trait of Greek genius, a refinement that did not follow the current of influence which spread over Italy after the fall of the empire, the nude, on the contrary, being painted as realistic as the skill of the artist permitted. And thus it happens that in the

Digitized by Google

paintings of the Early Renaissance among saintly characters is introduced a nude figure with heedful realism in color and form, — a barbarism only possible to an inartistic temperament. For the nude images of the Greeks are idealized, the fine keen intellectualism of the Grecian temperament permeant in the work, and therefore something of the grandeur of the evolution of the human form, its erectness and suppleness, power and mentality, is felt, those traits perceived as is perceived the nobility of a tree, in stem, branches, boughs, and foliage.

But what is the significance of the nude in Italian painting? All that it contains of message to the human spirit is a knowledge of the extremes to which love of admiration will carry a painter. Study of real life surely began badly in Italy; discarding the Byzantine facial atrocities and wooden images, a greater error took their place, and a show of knowledge was deemed of more importance than sentiment. Hence the blunder of Masaccio, whose desire to assure the world that he knew the structure of the human form caused him to introduce a primeval man among scriptural characters, an anachronism

Digitized by Google

which extreme insensibility to harmony of sentiment would dictate. And this blunder was committed when it was beginning to appear that Greek art had said the last word on the human form, and now was the artist's opportunity to add that which was of greater value, to become an exponent of the human spirit by representing its likeness registered in the human face, on this being recorded *individuality*, an individuality wrought out by human experience. But the artists of Masaccio's period were not seers, and they did not perceive that Greek art had finished its message and, departing, closed the door, nor that they were false to their era, turning back the wheels of progress, and repeating in blindness what was done with true feeling in sculpture ages before. Masaccio's work, indeed, hardly rivals that of the Æginetan marbles, and done without archaic naïveté, pretending to be studies from real life they were unreal, by reason of falsity to actual life.

The bad taste of Masaccio is not so prominent as that shown in Luca Signorelli's naked human figures, these strong, muscular, and violent in action, and in which there is no

Digitized by Google

heed to facial expression, physical life, physical prowess, without a hint of the soul animating the body, man, like the horses of Micon, typical of an animated physical force. An exhibition of technical skill, the works of Signorelli, compared with those of Fra Angelico for instance, if showing an evolution in skill, also betray a degeneracy of sentiment, a too frequent accompaniment of a study of the nude, as is later shown by Michael Angelo, whose evident passion for representation of the nude human figure led to portraiture of few attractive faces. But Michael Angelo is saved from the loud unreserve of the colorist, a sober harmony of tone being maintained that acts upon the imagination as effectually as the exclusion of color in the marble image. Beside, the latter artist did not, in display of technique, forget his theme, nor do his nude figures thrust themselves forward as the puppet of the artist's vanity. Some sentiment higher than art for art's sake is unfolded in Michael Angelo's work indeed, sentiments that are less induced by the senses than by reason; with him form, attitude, line, and poise characteristic, as in Greek art, supremacy in delineation

Digitized by Google

gaining by exclusion of brilliancy of color, a method of expression that is in accordance with the fact that structure is fundamental to a visualization of the ideal, this disclosing, as is impossible through color, the purpose and quality of the energy embodied, so presenting the sum of experiences and consequent evolutions.

Restraint in use of color, practiced by Michael Angelo in representing the human form, stands for restraint of passion, as may be perceived by its analysis.

Color in its dependency on circumstance possesses a feminine quality appealing to the heart, demanding less of the intellect. Martial men delight in color, as in beautiful women; brilliant color besieges the eye as the trumpet the ear; if war is proclaimed, city and citizen flame forth in color; martial and aggressive, or mellow and luminous, it is a sign of emotion either enthusiastic or subdued and pensive; and so, associated with the heart rather than with the intellect, its place in primitive language of correspondence is made intelligible; for how describe the deified forces of nature except through description of their raiment? If when sun-

Digitized by Google

beam weds the mellow earth, upspring troops of fragile elfs, their censers adorned with colors, red, blue, purple, and yellow, what more certain sign of the temper of the summer god!

Most fitting the hilarity of hues chosen by Fra Angelico for his saints in paradise, nor did he select the diverse tints without due regard to sacerdotal meaning; as, indeed, may be said in all early Gothic art, Byzantine and Arabic, discrimination in application of hues retained, which was itself an inheritance from the far East.

And here it is of interest to note that in Egyptian art, color and form are not divorced, and images of the gods are often discriminated by the color that is descriptive of their realm, if it be water, earth, or sky. But this application of color determined the sentiment, the god thus shown to be an ideal of the verdant earth, the blue sky, the pale waters. Moreover, primeval man, by imprints of color upon the flesh itself, identified himself with the god of his personal worship, so declaring his allegiance; and the colors so used were sacred if also applied to decorative purposes, — a voluntary emblem of service.

Digitized by Google

It is of striking contrast to the custom of branding animals, on whose flesh is set a signet of service that, in being involuntary, is slavery.

Consecration of color, traced back to primitive usages, rebukes its intemperate application in the Renaissant period if subjects of sacred import were the artist's theme, as in the myth of Adam and Eve. And it is observable that in pictures on which the seal of a more general approbation has been set, — as, for instance, Sodoma's Adam and Eve, — the tint is more or less subdued; and imitating the lofty sentiment of Leonardo, his master, Sodoma acquired a certain dignity of expression which is not found in such figures in the nude of his period.

But however satisfactory the delineation, the anachronism of woven linen, together with the modernity of the faces, is sufficient to condemn the picture as an expression of the idea set forth by the Hebrew bard in the story of the fall of man.

The annals of the world show that each civilization demands a witness in art of itself. Egypt, Greece, China, Japan, Mexico, and Peru possess severally a representative art.

Digitized by Google

Such also is the demand of modern civilization.

The artists in Italy, if discerning the demand, often failed to meet it, their difficulty lying in endeavoring to modernize scriptural events, to plant oriental flora in Roman soil. This effort is exemplified in Veronese's Marriage in Cana, where the artist has introduced the portraits of the distinguished citizens of Rome together with his fellow-artists, and all arrayed in gorgeous costumes, while Christ and his mother are in the background, so plainly disclosing the artist's subordination of his theme to that which was of present importance in his small world. Immingling present history with the past, many artists gave to the simple story of Palestine the pomp and circumstance of a Roman fête in which gorgeousness of color served for lack of truth, a gloss as pernicious when laid on sacred themes as the subterfuge of an unskilled draughtsman through use of color, the principle being the same.

It is to these falsities, among many others of the High Renaissance period, that may be traced the decadence of art in Italy. For at this period the ideal was gradually subordi-

Digitized by Google

nated to realism, the human figure a means of display of technique, sacred myths of the Bible opportunity for presentation of Roman affluence or churchly supremacy. Art had neither the characteristic of pagan sincerity nor Christian piety. The candor of innocence debased, the artist's brush became the instrument of degenerate sentiment, a condition that is typified in literature in the contrast between a Boccaccio garden scene and that of the Hebraic bard.

Degenerate sentiment in art is like in process to what is termed a dry rot in vegetal life, for if no longer an exponent of the true, which, visualized in natural phenomena, is also beauty, art decays, serving at length for fertilization of a new plant, the genius of the period determining the abundance of its bloom, as also the character of its species.

Furthermore, degenerate sentiment in art is but another expression for a general lapse of integrity of spirit, and this integrity, depending upon moral force, is ever at inverse ratio to self-consciousness; a phenomenon that would suggest that spontaneity, however inadequate the skill, is the first avenue of approach to truth, an idea that the decline of Italian art seems to indorse. For as dis-

Digitized by Google

play of technique took the place of delight in the expression of the beautiful, art degenerated.

Does not art for artist's sake hide behind "Veronese fecit?" Is not self-consciousness the blemish of that decadent spirit which fell like a cloud upon Guido Reni after his masterpiece, the Aurora?

Perhaps it were wiser that an artist should exist for the world only in his works; be known there and beloved as the Great Artist is known and beloved in his works.

Does the oriole label its nest, the plant its rose?

The more deft and winsome a thing, the more universal and less personal its title, being of God. And the more secret and unobserved the labor, the more sacred. It is war, rapine, and sacrilege that is loud, aiming at display.

In brief, consecration, self-forgetfulness, an unvociferant dedication to the true, beautiful, and good, wins through all eclipse, and rises at each round nearer the divine outstretched hands.

And the annals of consecration are replete with signs of approach at all epochs, in animate and inanimate life, as among men.

Digitized by Google

IV

NOT SHADOW BUT LIGHT MESSAGE OF ART

THE evolution of art furnishing a largesse of sentiment, now exalted and now commonplace, the artist at one time an idealist startling the world with his inspiration, at another time an imitator displaying mechanical skill, at last came to that period when sentiment failed, a blight falling on all expression except that of a mediocre character. This period, termed the decadent era of Italian art, is marked, however, by the appearance of a veritable landscape artist, Salvator Rosa being born in sixteen hundred (1615–1673). Distinguished, as was Titian, as a portrait painter, Salvator Rosa appears to have a keen perception of the elemental in human nature, as also a strong sympathy with nature. Indeed, his insight assumes the character of an interpretation of man through nature — the face of nature the face of human nature, its phases like the phases of emotion in the human spirit.

Digitized by Google

The Decadents were called Tenebrosi, or Darklings. They also were called Naturalists; and such was Salvator Rosa, in the sense that he studied, as had his predecessors of the Early Renaissance, *real life;* that is, realizing on his canvases visualized form, whether of animate or inanimate life, filling his canvas with the thrilling world of natural phenomena, representing impenetrable forests, lofty solitudes, storm-lashed coasts, and inaccessible heights. He also presented scenes that were not only the dens of wild beasts, but also of men, elemental in their disposition, wanderers from the restraints of civilization, and well known to the artist, as may be justly inferred by those marvelous portraits, heads of brigands in the Academy of St. Luke, Rome. And it is through these portraits is given a glimpse of the life of Salvator Rosa, which doubtless was passed in part in the precincts of these wolf-hounds of the Alps, his own temperament, it is not improbable, making this association not impossible. For Salvator Rosa, if a prophetic genius, had the limitations of his epoch, which was marked by passionate expression, Caravaggio, and Ribera, his early master, illuminating the

Digitized by Google

eclipse of art with lurid scenes conjured up by their brutal imagination, so sending forth from their dens in Naples a volcanic breath, full of anathema upon the gentler forms of art as created by Domenichino or Guido Reni, for instance; the latter painter making escape from persecution by a precipitate retreat, having entered the forbidden precincts of these artists,[1] while the former, it is claimed, was made victim, poisoned at their hands. That Salvator felt the influences about him, as in his youth he worked under the tutorage of Ribera, cannot be doubted, the result of which, however, was to give him a new insight into human nature, and that upon the shadowy side, — the aspect, for example, which was portrayed in literature by Sophocles's Œdipus, and in art by the Laocoön, — these works suggestive of an eclipse in the joyous Hellenic spirit. This view of human nature, expressed in Salvator Rosa's Heads of Brigands, is in startling contrast with that which is testified by the cloisteral

[1] A secret society was formed in Naples, in which Ribera and others were leaders, the avowed purpose to expel or poison any artist who entered the precincts to practice art.

Digitized by Google

faces of the Early and High Renaissance, or, indeed, of the Gothic period of art as represented in Fra Angelico.

It is, however, the third period of the evolution of expression, the first being that of the cloisteral face, — of the heavy somnambulic eyes, their lids drooping and lethargic, the soul under a spell; the second characterized by either the wide startled eyes of Raphael's Madonna or the firm, matronly grace of Murillo's Mary, an impressive dignity in the calm gaze. Of this period are the pictures of Andrea del Sarto, of whom it may be said that to imitate Raphael he could not if he would and would not if he could, as may be attested by his impersonation of St. John, whose bearing is full of vital force, eminently significant of the unlikeness of Andrea del Sarto's genius to that of the ecclesiastical painters of the High Renaissance, or, indeed, of either period of the evolution of Italian art, Gothic, Early Renaissance, and the final so-called High Renaissance, the era of a threatened dethronement of the cloisteral concept of the true, beautiful, and good. And this second representation of human nature, result of accumulated study from real

Digitized by Google

life, beginning so far back as the time of Masaccio and Ghirlandajo, Michael Angelo's early master, is a precursor of the Brigand Heads of Salvator Rosa. For study in real life as testified by the works of Andrea del Sarto, and in particular those of Michael Angelo, whose mighty stride in the way of open-air human nature, actual, living and sinning, is like the entrance of a Shakespeare in the field of Elizabethan poetry. Salvator Rosa represented things as he saw them. It is real life, and that of the times which, while rife with fictitious piety, was also rife with elemental human passions, — passions that the artist had perceived in daily intercourse with the Tenebrosi of Naples, not only, but in the mountaineers, the shepherds, and mariners, — passions of woe, of disaster, and envy that demanded the dens of wild beasts for freedom of action. And hence the environment given these figures, and whereby, as if in mutual affinity, nature and human nature are brought face to face, and together with the wrack of tempests, the overcreeping shadow (Ribera's chiaroscuro), there is the untamed wolf-hound, man.

But if elemental chaos, there is sublimity;

Digitized by Google

the demoniacal as with Ribera does not invite this new interpreter of nature and "real life," Salvator Rosa's distinction lying in this reserve, the ugly features of chaotic elements in man and nature being suggested while over and above all there is a strain of harmony. So marked is this that Salvator Rosa's influence is traced in Nicholas Poussin's (1560–1665) landscapes, although in this artist's work is no hint of elemental nature, chaotic and tempestuous, but simply a Titianesque representation of mountainous scenery together with masses of foliage, Roman architecture, and sculpturesque figures — a French rendering of Italy's charm to an average visitor!

But to Poussin must be given the distinction of transmitting to his native land seeds which bore remarkable fruit. To mention the name of Claude Lorraine (1600–1682) is to bring up scenes of natural beauty, not only, but to occasion a feeling of reassurance in the constancy with which art reillumines its torch after an eclipse, its apparent extinguishment a transitory flickering due to the decay of genuine uprightness of sentiments. To use an illustration: In ancient days,

Digitized by Google

there was the custom of reillumining the fires of sacred altars on an annual fête, a custom common to Peru, Mexico, China, and to Greece; and for this purpose a herald passed from place to place bearing a lighted torch, which, illumining the sacred fires, was also means of relighting the hearth-fires of the people under the charge of domestic lares.

And thus the herald of truth in art came to France, bringing the sacred fire, lit from Salvator Rosa's genius, nor did the herald remain there, but passed the borders of France, and at length is discerned igniting the genius of a man unlettered and of the common people, William Turner (1778–1851). And it is noteworthy that in this reillumination of the sacred fire in France and England, while in the former country decorative art was superseded by a sentiment for the beautiful in nature, the classic method still maintained its hold in the latter.

But if the classic appeared its reign was tentative, soon to be overthrown by the overpowering force of genius, which once alit, as in Turner, sways all lesser flames toward it. The largeness of the inspirations of the

Digitized by Google

human spirit influences the life. As a proof of this it is worthy of note that the English artist exhibited a fraternal spirit in abrupt contrast to the enmity that existed among artists in the decadent period in Italy, Turner candidly avowing his debt to Claude Lorraine, claiming that he was his model, and finally requesting that one picture of the French artist should be hung beside his own, and this in a gallery which was nevertheless dedicated to the English painter's works.

This incident is of peculiar import when considered in respect to the expression of art. Those brutalized souls, Ribera and Caravaggio, emitted the foulness of their nature, not only through their pictures, but on their fellow artists. But as in Claude Lorraine's pictures, and those of Turner, the ideals were drawn directly from nature whose dominant spirit is representative of the true and beautiful and good such was the sentiment exhibited in the lives of these interpreters, particularly in that of Turner, whose large fortune by his will, but for a mischance, would have fallen to his successors in art. Thus, living a habitually penurious and unluxurious life, he sought to confer the benefits of compar-

Digitized by Google

ative affluence on others. And this interior brightness of soul is shown in Turner's ready following of Claude Lorraine. For the French artist discovered that not shadow but light is the message of art. His annunciation received, Turner became nearly delirious over the delight which came upon him in view of aerial perspectives, and which he carried to such success that his luminous canvases well-nigh demented the poetic soul of Ruskin. Nor was Turner a disconnected link in the chain of landscape evolution by choice of subject, for, as Titian, Salvator Rosa, Poussin, and Claude Lorraine, he imbibed his "strength from the hills," and a surpassing love for the mountainous lands is exhibited by numerous illustrations of these majestic forms moulded by tempests and stroked by caressing winds, as also a passion for the long sweep of horizon lines, — his paintings including both phases, — in his rivers of England and France as in the picturesque scenery of the southern coast of England and Wales, these showing a delight in the illimitable and universal. Turner's largeness of grasp of the principal features of the region destined for his canvas, and

Digitized by Google

his final idealization of his subject, suggest Wordsworth's scene painting. Indeed, it may be claimed that the artist is an inspirer of the poet, and that the latter by means of words expressed what the former had presented by means of delineation and color, painting thus in advance. The reader, I hope, will pardon a quotation here, for diverse leadings and followings in man's ascent toward the inward brightness betray the increasing hold of nature's visualized ideals, and which it is the province of art to illustrate: —

> "Then when the peal of swelling torrents fills
> The sky-roof'd temple of the eternal hills;
> Or when, upon the mountain's silent brow
> Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
> Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow;
> While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
> Tremble in ever-varying tints of air."

Wordsworth's descriptive sketches in his walking tour among the Alps are an evidence of a spirit set abroad, first by Dante, and then betrayed in Titian's mountain scenery, his paintings followed by those of Salvator Rosa and Poussin. These pictures are illustrative of the influence of natural grandeur upon the artistic temperament, this being

Digitized by Google

like that which prompted Wordsworth's acknowledgment in lines written near Tintern :—

> "The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy mood,
> Their colors and their forms, were thus to me
> An appetite ; a feeling and a love
> That had no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, nor any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye."

It is in the last line is betrayed the method of the painter. "I have always," says this poet of Rydal Mount, "endeavored to look steadily at my subject."

Wordsworth was imbued with the new forces set upon the human spirit in the eighteenth century whence was the inspiration of Keats and Shelley, their luminous spirits fused in the electric currents that flow from the heart of Deity immanent in nature, a brilliant report of which Turner has given, his brush dipped in the glory of the sun, form transfigured in his aerial perspective. And it may not be forgotten that the aerial perspective in painting, product of Claude Lorraine's genius, is in following, with an intelligent view of nature, "truths plucked as they are

Digitized by Google

growing," earth and sky so shown to unite in harmony of tender gradation, all the apparent demarcations losing themselves in unity of tone; an interpretation, in fact, in following with the investigations of science, the scientist and artist each in their way in the new era affording an insight into the harmony and coherency of the universe.

Primeval man read nature as a child reads his spelling-book, each object, so to speak, spelled out, the difficulty in aptitude at expression showing itself prominently as in the case with children whose faculties are a type of conditions that obtained among primitive men to a certain degree, the comparison holding more particularly, however, where skill of hand is considered.

Here it should be observed that there was an unchildlike apprehension among primitive artists of the comparative significance of objects — that, for instance, a tree might represent many trees, or a woodland. Furthermore, the grouping of objects declared a systematic acquaintance with the means of producing an association of ideas, whereby the purpose of a picture might be understood.

Digitized by Google

If the primitive artist, for example, wished to represent a bivouac in a woodland, he pictured a tree, a tent, and a man, each with such skill as he possessed, and though severally unrelated, as far as combination through perspective conduces to relation of parts, he induced recognition of his purpose, and in a degree his picture was a success. Intelligence had dictated the representation, and it appealed to intelligence. Could this be said of all works of modern art? Indeed, no. An apprehension of the necessity in artistic work that there should be a motif which shall appeal immediately to the intelligence is not universal among the devotees to fine art. Vagaries in color are often mistaken for pictures, conveying no idea. They are more childish than the work of the primitive artist, whose tree, tent, and man, destitute of that subtile unity to effect which all phenomena had conspired, had given an idea carrying out the picture's purpose.

But though directness is characteristic of primitive art, and it is a special qualification necessary to expression, the human spirit demanded unity of purpose, which finally trained the hand to perspective and har-

Digitized by Google

mony of composition that, joining itself to prior power, enthroned art as a representative of truth whose power is manifest both in nature and human nature, the recognition of which, together with directness and unity of purpose, constitutes an artist's claim to precedence.

The union of these two qualifications is, however, very infrequent, and it is this one-sided development in Ruskin's example of complete expression (the Turner landscape) this infrequency is the more evident since the artist arrived at such success in so many points whereby truth is illustrated. For Turner, in his infatuation for aerial perspective, represents harmony without directness, a defect which may be emphasized by comparison of the modern landscapist, Corot; for this artist, while giving an impression of the illimitableness of light, also presents the limitableness and continuity of form by means of a characterization as indubitable as that of Perugino.

To blur over the real and tangible is not to idealize, and there is much to say in behalf of this latter artist, as his followers even in their leaning toward ancient methods, for

Digitized by Google

a picture among the ancients must mean something, and say what it meant. The urgency of ideals even at that time more or less helpful to this end, this urgency and trend of the ideals shown indeed in ancient speech, for the primitive orator is often sententious and perspicuous, his objective point clearly enforced. And methods are traceable in pictography, the earliest form of literature, wherein may be discovered objective images remarkable for their directness of illustration even when involved in complex matters which require the introduction of time and state, together with place. And it is in the struggle with these difficulties, while firmly retaining the desire for singleness of expression, — so narrating the concept that it reaches the understanding of men, — that there came into existence both the breadth and directness in Greek art shown at last in the Parthenon, in which building there is completeness of design, singleness of purpose, and exactitude of meaning, the motif plainly dedicatory; the ensemble of figures, compactness of cella, and encircling columns emphasizing the purpose of the construction so completely that there was no evidence of

Digitized by Google

equivocation, — the candor of the ancients shown at last with a mastery of expression that exhibited the power of the human spirit over matter.

Classic art being suited to the expression of those sentiments which characterize ecclesiastical architecture, as also emotions dictated by hero-worship, remained long in force in French painting, as is representatively shown by the pictures of David (1775–1825) and his school. But the progressive spirit of the age set flowing a current of feeling that ran counter to the classic method, that, if through the simplicity and directness gives majesty to the temple as dignity to the statue, is incapable of presenting modern ideals. Indeed, in its own age it may be questioned if classic art ever caught up with the advanced Greek thought, whose literature, in the van of poetic interpretation, inspired by natural phenomena is an acute interpreter of human nature as developed prior to the new era. And the limitations of classic art as regards the present age are illustrated in the paintings of those artists who, like David, labored in the loom of their imagination, looking backward as weavers of Gobelin tapestry.

Digitized by Google

David was given to a certain hard-grained literalism also, for he thought by delineating the body of a man and then encasing him in raiment he had insured his living likeness. But it is one thing to possess the body of a man and another to capture his soul, a truism evidently not calculated on by this eminent artist when painting the portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte, for, had Salvator Rosa represented this hero of David, and at that time of the world, it is not at all unlikely that a brigand's face would have been hinted at under the historic chapeau.

Classicism fails at the threshold of modern life; it is impossible in landscape art except transfigured anew, — given the soul of the age.

Nature is both subjective and objective, and the inner soul of outward form is an immanent energy — "coming softly, through the hollows and thickets, trailing aslant in multitudes." It may not be treated academically or with traditional rule and measure but intuitionally, heart pulsing against heart — God and man, the one in the flaming bush, the other with soul aflame.

An impulse toward this worshipful feeling

Digitized by Google

is recognized in a realization of the power and majesty of the sea as presented by M. Géricault's Wreck of the Medusa, a work that elevated the artist to the place of leader in romantic art, and it is of interest to note that this painter's chief work presents nature and man face to face, — a Salvator Rosa's interpretation, but showing another phase, and where the elements overwhelm man instead of appearing to be allied with him in a chaotic unrest.

It was the picture of the Wreck of the Medusa that changed the current of art from classic formalism to a living drama, and, establishing the romantic school, it was incentive to those exponents of nature and human nature who, like Corot and Rousseau, finally became prominent in interpreting the impression of nature upon the human spirit, — M. Jacque and Rosa Bonheur representing a growing sympathy for lower animate life, while Millet and Meissonier were exponents of human nature, the former illustrating peasant, the latter civic life.

And in the works of these four artists it is observable that the tendency is toward the democratic instead of aristocratic, toward the

Digitized by Google

common life of men and animals, — a similar tendency to that observable in the selection of the "open air" by Watteau and Teniers as scene of their charming pictures, men and women in festive colors like birds in wooing time making merry in the sun; for the latter artists delighted in the festive hours which redeem toil of its austerity.

But it is necessary to note that, if democratic in tendency, the works of Millet, the peasant artist, are expressive of little joy; on the contrary they are witness to a feeling of servitude which is one of the features of the present era, and equally among the rich as the poor, the one being burdened with too much, the other with too little, the equalization of which is the problem of modern life, since the saddling of the equal yoke is necessary to a satisfactory cleaving by the ploughshare to issue of a good harvest.

But if Millet's pictures are expressive of servitude, are they not an impressive illustration of an unquestioning stolidity?

Where exists the Promethean fire of aspiration which spurns that labor that gives meat for the body alone?

Millet himself with his genius is a response

Digitized by Google

to this question, since exercise of God-given faculties destroys servitude. But even then there is one soil for the cactus and another for the rose, — a field for one man and a garden for another, while each has his Angelus, both under one sky!

This peasant artist presents a picture of unintelligent toil, and the possibilities, which lie at every point of human life where toil may be subordinated into automatic activity, the mind set free to blazon a path to higher matters, are unwittingly represented in the sweep of his brush in aerial perspective, as also the cradling environment of nature, calm, permanent, and inviolable: that temple of God and his hosts whose entrance is given him who seeks it.

The toiler without aspiration, the gleaner without ideals, and the wrecked and drowning who fail to subdue the wave by swimming, are the themes of pessimism, but happily they do not prevail, for the sun shines and God is good.

After Géricault and Millet another sentiment is origin of new expression, and which curiously is like the dawn after darkness if considered in contrast with the decadent

Digitized by Google

period of art, for succeeding these artists appears the apostle of sunlight, Monet, and whose followers may be called children of light instead of the Tenebrosi, since they assume that there is no darkness as such, the shadow but a witness to the sun, — a ray in a raiment of purple.

Aerial perspective, light, the radiance around the earth, infatuated the English artist as it had Claude Lorraine, and the same sentiment inspires the modern school of art; but it should be remembered that not in Claude Lorraine and Turner alone the craving to capture light gave impetus to the renaissance of the ideals of art. Rubens, the Flemish dramatist in art, not only was infatuated with all those possibilities of instilling sunbeams into paints in view of which with much care each artist alike spreads his colors on his palette, — but he conquered difficulties to such an extent that Guido, seeing his work, exclaimed, Does he mix his paints with blood? and that notwithstanding he himself was author of the Aurora, also familiar with Giorgione, the master colorist of Venice as was Rembrandt of Amsterdam. But Rubens, if he mixed his paints with blood, and so

Digitized by Google

painted the rose in flesh, like Titian failed. Except as master inventor, dramatic and forcible as a delineator, he had no report to give of the ideal man who is uncharacterized, except as sometimes a bacchanalian, — a drunken Silenus with Satyrs and Bacchante, a Loyola, a Xavier, or in a stalwart Joseph, the too solid flesh apparent. And his Christs, an improvement on the weak representations of the Pre-Raphaelite period, have nevertheless the stamp of this artist's nature. It might be concluded indeed that Rubens was born with all the intelligence of a man, but destitute of a soul like a rose without fragrance, for, while his talent is indisputable, possessing energy, a classic student, with command of technique, a boundless invention and the qualifications of the dramatist, he does not appeal to the human spirit; scantily satisfying the intellect he leaves the heart unstirred. It is impossible to think of him among the unopulent and unfortunate and so studying human nature as did Rembrandt whose love of nature was the one influence of his life.

The contrast between these two artists is most noteworthy: belonging to the same

Digitized by Google

period, one born a little in advance of the other, and both of Salvator Rosa's time,[1] they show the abiding influence of environment, that environment the result of innate affinities. And Rembrandt, a student of real life, with an unerring perception of character, occupies the enviable position of an interpreter of individualism maturing through the evolution of the human spirit. His horizon, it is true, is narrow, for he never visited Italy like Rubens, or like Goethe, the great exponent of human nature, but remained on watch in his own place of nativity. Here he had material, however, of the most desirable quality. For the Dutch possess an inherent positiveness of nature that assures to them a continuance among the families of men; as stubborn as the oak, and as fertile of seed in the realm of truth and uprightness, this people has maintained itself by inward strength rather than through the favor of outward circumstance. Happy the artist whose perceptions were equal to the interpretation of such natures! For here was undoubted force of character, not pas-

[1] Salvator Rosa, 1615–1673; Rubens, 1577–1640; Rembrandt, 1607–1669.

Digitized by Google

sionate, like the Italian, not emotional like the French, not realistic like Netherlanders, but having these qualities so blended that while persistently realistic, it, so to speak, stumbles upon the ideal. For instance, Rembrandt painting a picture of Christ represents the face not of Christ's own nationality — not of a Hebrew, but of a possible citizen of the Netherlands, so illustrating the universality of Christ's nature, disclosing it to us so godlike that the spirit of his doctrines actualized makes every man a Christ, be his lineaments those of a Hollander or other nationality.

This form of idealism is not always of outward observation, for while apparently it is literal and objective, it is profoundly subjective.

Rembrandt's treatment of light and shade is particularly characteristic. This may be seen by comparison with the works of the Tenebrosi — these artists assuming chiaroscuro for the purpose of startling effect, covering, as has been said, their canvases with broad shadows, the light introduced reluctantly and limited to small area as apparently did Rembrandt, — but with what

Digitized by Google

marvelous difference of effect! Where in the Tenebrosi pictures is the lustre around and about the subject presented? Where is the suggestiveness of the immanence of spirit, the reminiscence of transfigurement of form into a being of light? Rembrandt's pictures are an indirect statement of the evanescence of visual forms that at any moment "these our actors may like the firmament dissolve and leave not a rack behind," — for the human face looks out from the shadows, as a traveler's face in passing is lit by a lamp hung by the way, — a moment, and the face is gone!

There is nothing in all Italian art (so rich with saintly faces by halos encircled) that equals this masterly expression of the unabidingness of human life in a fixed sphere. Raphael sought to express transition from earthly to heavenly life by representation of the Madonna upon ascending clouds, and the rare face he has pictured brings to mind those inimitable lines in Stephen Phillips's "Herod:" —

> "Those eyes that bring upon us endless thoughts,
> That face that seems as it had come to pass
> Like a thing prophesied."

Digitized by Google

But the painter, while so triumphant in his skill, fails to give that interpretation of the unsubstantiality of visualized form which Rembrandt conveys even in his Anatomy Lecture, the most realistic of pictures, but more specially in The Night Watch. It is not difficult after viewing Rembrandt's works to imagine the artist walking the poorest streets of Amsterdam, looking into faces of common humanity as did Prince Buddha, but not as he, quailing at the sight.

On the contrary he laid their case before his fellow-citizens in all honesty and candor of delineation, while the effect of these scenes upon this profound student of human nature is not without its record, for he suffered his imagination to have sway, not in these living portraits of humanity, but when portraying nature. Here, in the landscape, is a feeling of solitude, as though his deep soul had suffered in the wilderness, dismayed by the problems of life, for his landscapes, full of intense feeling, are representations of no particular place, and as if conceived through melancholy reflections upon the phenomena of nature, perceiving its unlimited power to illustrate the conditions of the human spirit.

Digitized by Google

As might have been anticipated, succeeding Rembrandt, there arose a Dutch school of landscape painters, among whom Ruysdael, Hobbema, and Cuyp are the more conspicuous, Ruysdael showing a similar sentiment to that exhibited by Rembrandt, his paintings being expressions of poetic melancholy, while Hobbema shows a delight in sun-irradiated trees, and happy village life, as indeed does Cuyp. Wouvermans and Potter are of the same school and period, these painters characterized by a sympathy for lower animate life, which afterward gave to the world Landseer's masterly portraits of deer and dogs and Rosa Bonheur's interpretations, these anticipating modern animal studies in literature, each showing the rapid approach of a unison between nature and human nature prophetic of the new Eden.

It is of curious interest that while Holland gave birth to a master in painting, Germany, the Alma Mater of the ideal, cradle of music and literature, has few painters of influence, the sentiment being manifest the genius wanting. Thus Goethe's passion for art is representative, he desiring to express himself by the brush, but con-

Digitized by Google

fined by the limitations common to great intellects to one medium, that being the pen.

And for the reason of this combination of sentiment for art and inadequate skill it is all the more interesting to note the effort at a revival of German painting in the nineteenth century, a society having been formed in Rome in 1810 for that purpose. This society earned the name of Pre-Raphaelites owing to their purpose of returning to the old fifteenth century faith as represented by the works of Fra Angelico, Botticelli, and those painters succeeding them who appear to have been governed by religious feeling, the founders of the society claiming in Dürer (1471–1528) and Holbein (1497–1543) that Germany possessed representative artists belonging to the same category, since they evinced equal fervency of religious feeling. But though the promoters of this society were influential in establishing a taste for religious painting, such works as Lessing's Luther, The Reformation, and Hofmann's Boy Christ in the Temple, Christ and the Rich Young Ruler, apparently springing up in obedience to the changed current of sentiment, their effort failed of its object.

Digitized by Google

Following this new departure in Germany, the promoters of which have since been called the Brethren, another society was inaugurated in 1847 in England, which, adopting the tenets of the German society, called itself the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The tenet of this society is a matter of some uncertainty, since while some of its members are realists, others are idealists, while in no artist is found a counterpart to a Botticelli, or indeed a Perugino, this noteworthily proving that the development of modern sentiment and the attitude of the more matured mentality of man forbids a recessional in art.

Pre-Raphaelism indeed is out of focus with the ideals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as classic art was out of harmony with the period when appeared Corot, Millet, and Rosa Bonheur in France. And this is shown in the records of the society, whose members very rapidly fell away from the methods assumed at the beginning as fundamental to its establishment as soon as it was discovered that in applying those methods the importance of the subject treated was minimized by the accessories, — as, for instance, happened in Holman Hunt's pictures,

Digitized by Google

these losing their force, the theme being not more accentuated than the accessories. A defect that thrust back this otherwise great master into line with the little masters of Dutch *genre* art, whose representative artist, Gerard Dow (1613–1675), though a pupil of Rembrandt and therefore an adept in chiaroscuro, through want of sentiment is unable to stir the heart, or to give that which is of every-day experience a suggestiveness that is essentially belonging to these experiences, they being the means of the evolution of the human spirit which it is the province of art to emphasize.

The subjects selected by the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren, while often religious, are marred by a modernism that is inevitable to the treatment in detail of facts that are only of interest by way of their symbolic meaning, this meaning having the effect of perspective in landscape which, fusing minor matters into a coherent whole, directs the attention to the one object characterizing the interpretation. Aiming at the truth the intended absolute realism of Holman Hunt's works, for example, is not such, for the idea is the absolutely real, and being the only permanent thing it

Digitized by Google

should be the only object of expression in art. It is the meaning that Botticelli put into his pictures that touches the heart, this painter's devout spirit betrayed above all his partial success in delineation, a fact that the German Brethren perceived as did not Holman Hunt, taking his pictures as an evidence of the attitude of his mind.

But the Germans with their gift of ideality were unable to express the sentiment they desired to revoke into art; Hofmann's paintings are little in advance of Hunt's, there being a literalness in them which suggests a drought in the realm of the ideal.

Holman Hunt's pictures precipitated a disaffection among the disciples of Pre-Raphaelism, and what with the entrance of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, with a poetic temperament which like an orchid flourished in a foreign clime through independence of soil, English art recovered what had been gained through Turner, the truths of color, light, and atmosphere assumed as of first importance since in nature all objects are perceived through this trinity.

Rossetti perforce is an idealist; a poet, and with an Italian temperament, how was it pos-

Digitized by Google

sible for him to fix his attention on the detailing a blade of grass? Singing his way into the avenues of art, he conjured such an argosy of sprites about the heads of the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren that they began to dream dreams, and see signs. And symbolism in art returned with the subtile faces pictured by this exile from Italian skies, and Millais hastening the transition, bore witness to the change, Burne-Jones — pupil of Rossetti — and Sir Frederick Leighton followed, and thus the threatened literalism in art was stayed.

Digitized by Google

V

IDEALS AND "OUR OWN IMAGE"[1]

IDEALS are immanent in the cell of the bee and in the nest of the sparrow, and the development of design finally represented in architecture is prophesied by the crystal and the pine, inanimate as animate nature being impressed into the service of divine expression.

A curious intelligence is discovered, indeed, where is growth, the impetus of growth apparently originating in desire to formulate an idea that expresses delight, so manifesting what is in the Heart of God. And the completeness of parts, in crystal, flower, and tree, displaying a builder's instinct, immanent in nature, invites the attention to consider the work of the wasp, originator of paper-making, the aptitude of the spider in weaving, of the robin in plastering; to admire the terra-cotta cup of the swallow and all

[1] Genesis i. 26.

Digitized by Google

the fine interlacements of birds' nests hidden in thicket or on umbrageous stem; for in these advanced achievements is observed the universal wisdom prodigal in endowments where substance exists. Nature has a crowd of artisans that are unwearying in manufacturing objects of beauty, and man of necessity through his heirship is equally active in building new forms, transmuting metals, chipping stone, and founding architectural styles that satisfy his demand for expression of the ideal. Man in fact is only content when expressing thought, wherefore it happens that he exists in a sphere of ideas made visible. City streets are paved with thought, thought is origin of the paper on our walls, of the carpet under our feet, of the cup we drink from, each thought having a history that is as inspiring to the pen of the romanticist as are the varied events of a human life, — that thought individualized and clothed with circumstance. The network of common avocations indeed is but expression of the evolution of the human spirit that in the exercise of its inborn energies is forever assuming the rôle of a creative spirit — a son of God.

Pressing forward, dedicating his faculties

Digitized by Google

to the ideal, utility a means only to compass the grand purpose to environ himself with beauty as does the flower, his life becomes a song of praise.

The lotos was a favorite example in the Orient to illustrate the dominance of divine energy which annually rehabilitated the vegetal world, and this may furnish an example of the exercise of the creative energy of men in embodiment of ideals. For the fine arts are the flowers of thought, they are the embodiments of the aspiration of the human spirit, and appearing upon the stream of life, adorning it with beauty, they rise upon the vision like the lilies upon the waters of the sacred Nile. And shall it not be said that divine love thirsts for an externalization of thought whence the phenomena of nature, the beauty of star, flower, and bird? Furthermore, that this immortal thirst universal in nature is intensified in human nature, whence the growth of expression, the steady evolution of art and literature, processes of thought generating new expression?

It is a breath of that aura, the limitless sphere of divinity that inspires the poet, — that gave firmness to the hand of Phidias

Digitized by Google

and facility to the pen of Shakespeare. Inspiration is shown by artist and writer, these creative spirits experiencing momentous epochs when ideals arise before their inspired vision like a flock of birds soaring and singing their way into the wide fields of the world. Then it is an epic is born, — a lyric, or a sonnet. And then the artist hurriedly fills his canvas with scenes of beauty or an ideal face, the two prominent methods which are used to express ideals being a portrayal of man and a representation of natural phenomena by means of the landscape picture, these two in their highest development serving to express what form and phenomena typify to the human spirit; a development in which the landscape becomes an epitome of universal nature, and the human figure a representation, or image, of divinity. In the former, that is, the landscape, avoiding details which are obstacles to breadth, the artist sweeps away that sense of limitation enforced by the boundaries of natural vision, the merit of his work interpretation not imitation, its supreme value lying in a representation otherwise unseen of the experiences of the human

Digitized by Google

spirit when face to face with the divine in nature. A comprehensive view, it permits no intrusion of the accidental and trivial; the lines are free, bold, and uncomplex, suggesting space, illimitable distance, and a sense of the universal, and so the human spirit seeking an environment consistent with its native quiet finds it, for in such a disposition of lines there is the spirit of sublimity which is uniformly calm, being remote from the vortex of transient activities.

And it is breadth in art particularly, that brings to view the accord of forces which have ordered details into a complete whole, forces that are kindred to those in the souls of men, — massing harmonies in color and line, this comprehensive breadth produces a melody that is without sound, delighting the human spirit whose own elements have constituents of sublimity and luminosity, these voiceless except by means of artistic expression. Appealing to spiritual exaltation the inspired picture emphasizes height by the lonely tree, or the buttressing rock so suggesting that imperious uplift of the mountain whose broad shoulders mantle themselves with the azure of heaven, while by defining

Digitized by Google

the ineffectual climb of a phalanx of girdling pines human limitations are suggested, these primeval minarets on the mountain side determining vegetal life's boundaries. Suggestions of and witnesses to truer harmonies than those of color and line, the mountain landscape competes with the original scene; having passed through the alembic of human inspiration it bestows an exaltation of feeling associated with the life of the spirit.

Interpretation of the sublimity of an uplift of rock, forest, and tableland is product of a vision dependent on the soul's sight, and sublimity is not more intrinsic to mountainous scenery than is color to a garden of flowers. This is evident in the obliviousness of the Greeks and Italians to the artistic suggestiveness of their environment when art had arrived at more or less completeness in skill of execution.

Comprehensive as was the genius of Michael Angelo, for example, there is no evidence that his imagination was consciously quickened by the mountain heights about him, when seizing on those marble masses lying in their depths he triumphed in what chisel and hammer were to disclose through them.

Digitized by Google

And the campagna at the foot of environing hills and mountains gave little apparent delight to the artist, if influencing his temperament, for when art flourished in Rome, level or mountain had yet to be interpreted. And as it is due to science that the vision of what is unseen in organic life is made clear through the microscope, so it may be said that advanced intelligence has ennobled the majesty of the mountains.

The sentiment that has bidden the traveler forsake the city and seek the mountains is a mark of growing apprehension of what the modern painter has interpreted, an interpretation in such advance of the ancient artist that it is like a new conception, a truth for the first time discovered and divulged.

But the seekers of beauty and sublimity when in their immediate presence, if without the soul's sight given the artist, are liable to find naught but stone and earth heaped up, and crude; their apprehension not yet matured, these visitors retire disappointed.

And all forms of nature are alike in their demand for an interpreter's vision, for the book of nature may be read only by those schooled in its language. The low level of

Digitized by Google

the plain is monotonous and of no interest to the uninformed, while the inner vision perceives that it seeks the sky as the mountain whose pyramidal thrust charges the cloudy infantry of heaven, for its breadth and onward movement are unbroken to the very gates of dawn or sunset while its calm distances are emphasized by vanishing lines converging and beating retreat from the immediate and definite. But if the human spirit delights in space and distances, so feeling the triumph of spirit over matter, there is joy in the cloistered stillness of the woodlands where occasional shafts of sunbeams dance upon the populous turf, or, striking down the slender stem of a birch, plunge an arrow into the wrinkled rivulet at its foot.

In the woodland, as on the mountain or the plain, there is escape from that importunate personal factor whose extortionate demands exhaust the native elasticity of the spirit. And the landscape picture is a response to weariness in much doing, much striving, and many stumblings by the way. It affords refuge for the human spirit fleeing abrasion from too manifest personalities.

Digitized by Google

Personality, the individual selfhood, harasses if inciting achievement at the slumberous epoch of thought's germination, and this disturbing element always demanding dramatic action is incompatible to landscape art, at whose threshold noisy activity is dropped.

Delight in an absorption of self into the absolute founded the creed of the Indies; delight in self-manifestation is at basis of activities in manifold directions in the Western world, and landscape art is an interpretation of the former delight and figure painting of the latter, inasmuch as the one is expressive of the continuously calm, the contemplative, and permanent, and the other interpretive of the dramatic and personal.

A demand for respite from a world overfull of dramatic forces, each contending for the desired goal, has led the adventurous foot among the glacial heights of the Alps and Andes, whose remoteness from human environment offers seclusion, and it has made the hermit and the monk, the one seeking the cloistered woodland, the other the monastic retreat, for repose, where is no sound of obtrusive footfall, is a balm to the overtaxed spirit, and this same demand for repose is

Digitized by Google

satisfied by the picture which permits no intrusions, — for it is the artist's privilege to seclude the mountain's heights with a perennial blue, suggesting the silence and majesty of the Unnamable and Perfect, — to him, indeed, there is no common day revealing the rigid and stark body of the giant form, unveiled and unconsecrated; a place of vision, the altar of the gods, as was conceived in days when none but the consecrated foot of priest dared climb its solitary heights, the mountain appears on the artist's canvas as a cumulus cloud realized and permanent, now vibrating and tremulous with heat, or threatening and vast, the lightning, cleaving its front, revealing through the sundered vapors depths yet more threatening and obscure. So presented, it is not alone a picture of a mountain, but an assurance of that too often forgotten fact that "the seen is a manifestation of the unseen," — a concept that is a revelation similar to that given through the invention of the telescope, and by which instrument it came to be known that the earth is not a pivotal point around which the heavens revolve.

Scientific discovery, indeed, has laid its

Digitized by Google

axe to the root of many errors, and among which the error of self-importance is not the least conspicuous.

But it may be presumed that, corrected of its errors, the human spirit is not eclipsed long, nor does it ever assume the rôle of a burned-out planet, for its nature is luminous and penetrative; it will neither remain in darkness nor permit its neighbors to do so. Does not water rise to the level of its source? So does the soul! Devious is the pilgrimage, but secure, — if retaining the primal elements of the spring.

Pastoral painting was imitated by the pastoral poet; he it was that began the chant to nature, late though the epoch of human advancement, for the poet, being a maker, is herald in all evolutions of the intelligence of man applied to manifestations of the unseen. Thus when at last pæans were sung of nature's harmonies, then followed color symphonies, these representing light, air, foliage, shadow, and sun, the picture succeeding the poem, not at once, but many years after.

Virgil chanted his pastorals, and thereafter came as distant echoes the landscape studies

Digitized by Google

of Titian, and each were anticipative of a sentiment for natural beauty whence were to arise representations through pen and brush whose epochs are the storm-cloud, the tornado, and the joyous advance of spring.

And of all forms of art, dealing least with human passions and the details of personal existence, landscape art is the least capable of flattery, while it is at the same time full of appeal; impersonal, it arouses that subconscious sense of unity in nature, a sense that provides unexpected assurances of the existence of things unseen. For unity in nature discloses unity in the phenomena of force in its culminations and consistent results, — a unity that leads to the certainty that the divine mind in its reaches and resources is one. And an insight into these matters leads art into an idealism that has for its end a representation of unity, showing the relations of forces to phenomena to be binding after the manner of the relations of mind to matter, — showing that function is requisite to force, and body to spirit, their unity a security to continuity, while the existence of one is a necessity to the other, a duality indivisible, constant, and self-main-

Digitized by Google

tained. Astronomy has shown that the earth is a star, luminous in the sphere of its orbit; and art declares the ideal ensphering the real, — that ideal a representation of the meaning of the real, for art laid hold of symbolism from the beginning, — the natural symbolism derived from the fact that form is expression of force.

But the ancients, though perceiving that objects were visible signs of unseen power, were unable to grasp the idea of unity apprehended by later investigations in which the universe came to appear as one, a coherent whole. It is modern science that has shown that the apparent lines of demarcation in living organisms, for example, are in fact vanishing, becoming altogether indistinct in convergence; and these developments determining conceptions of unity in complexity, though belonging to that which is termed the exact sciences, are in simple following with the inspiration of imagination which annealed objects into relations which, while actually existent, were not established in so far as outward appearance was concerned.

Art and science are seldom divorced, for the one is an exponent and the other a seeker

Digitized by Google

of the truth. It is the artist, however, that stumbles as he seeks to manifest the ideal which his art has indicated. To find that breadth spread out before him by earth and sky which is prophesied in Greek art — a breadth that appeals directly to the human spirit; to combine and balance lines, limiting them only at the point of evanescence, so making musical modulations to the eye, as rhythm of verse is made in measure and metre; to clothe with light and hide in shadow; to give subtle hints to human presence, or better still an invocation of that presence by means of tender grace and assurances of actualities — to do this called forth a new order of genius indeed, a genius that recognizes in itself conditions typified and emphasized in nature, as also attributes that are shadowed forth by nature.

And it was necessary to the development of this new genius that all those achievements in sculpture and painting in both Greece and Italy, training the artist to concepts of beauty and truth, should have culminated, so preparing the way for work in a field heretofore unexplored; nay, more, it was necessary that science should disclose

Digitized by Google

the serial development of the human figure and its relative importance to the advance of creative energy in control of matter in order that the suggestiveness of nature should find interpretation, for how else was man's understanding to be released from the haughty self-laudation of the past? How discover the ideals and the all-pervading Presence in nature? Experience goes before structure, rather knowledge by application evolves structure in the physical world, so also in the intellectual realm, for experience provided by environment induces mentality. Inventiveness, for example, is developed through knowledge, by means of which the adaptations of insects to environment is accomplished — they who put to shame the sluggard by their ceaseless energy, who, in consequence of aroused inventive powers, enlarge their boundaries, so increasing their brain power, strengthening the capacity-for application of its energies in the same manner that the physical body gains strength by exercise.

One of the principal obstacles to the growth of landscape art was the idea of the slight importance of environment, thus

Digitized by Google

the landscape came to be regarded as the supplement to the figure, an idea stubbornly maintained, for it is in accordance with the earlier view that the universe is but a background to man, a view that was held for many generations, and among peoples, like the Assyrians and Romans, whose imaginations had been enkindled to a sense of beauty, in the one case shown by floral ornamentations, and in the other by representation of the beauty of the human form, this proving that until science interferes by means of a more exact knowledge of the relations of things, the sense of beauty, owing to its limitation, is likely to misdirect the labors of art in the interpretation of the ideal. A necessity for accurate information is noteworthily exemplified in the ignorance of artists of the wide-reaching law of perspective up to a comparatively recent period, an ignorance that grew out of a want of investigation as much as a lack of ability. For the conventionalized flower delineations in Assyrian sculpture, and the adroit combination of diverse images in Egypt, those images of combined parts as distinct as body of man and head of beast, declare a power

Digitized by Google

to fuse into a coherent whole diverse objects, a power that when developed should make an accomplished landscapist. And this fact, representative in the evolution of intellectualism, is one of the many in which is observed the dominance of a traditional attitude of thought whereby progress is obstructed, a dominance that is reinforced by the natural tendency of man epitomized in the child, who is an irrepressible egoist until intelligence ripens, his misconceptions assailed by incontrovertible facts. And it is in view of explainable facts the educated imagination rebuilds its structures, as the child, developed into man, rebuilds his concepts, whence it happened that a new field of art was discovered; for the importance of environment understood, the landscape was no longer the background, but the sphere of man, which, like the air, held him in orbit, maintaining his integrity through natural environment.

That the mediæval artists, as for instance Perugino and Raphael, aiming at atmospheric effects, studied a proper setting to their pictures is evident, and here and there some rare spirit escaped from the importunate

Digitized by Google

thrall of human egoism, giving an environment, for example, to the Madonna, ideal of passionate piety, an environment which, though subordinate, prophesied the advent of Claude and Salvator Rosa, who, together with Poussin, laid a foundation to landscape art. But it is evident even when so initiated interest in natural beauty was slow in gaining place, for a dominant preference for human figures subjected Poussin's pictures to the intrusion of inconsequent figures which impaired their profound suggestiveness.

And it was a long time after this artist flourished that such tendencies held sway; indeed, it may be said that they continue to exist in the popular mind, and the picture without representation of human life, or that has some association which is cherished through personal acquaintance with the scene, is regarded with indifference. This is especially noteworthy in the United States, for the average American is not appreciative of the landscape, the visitor of expositions seeking first the picture of the figure painter, wherefore the artist, dependent on patronage, struggles with representations of semi-madonnas, and consequently faces ungra-

Digitized by Google

cious to the eye look down upon the visitor from the overcrowded wall. And in consequence of this taste for figure painting the talents of a landscapist are often left to degenerate into mere imitations. Copies of the Italian masters or of the English coterie, for example, who from portraits of nobility, that privileged class to whom art must needs pay deference, at last evolved typical figures that were but simple, fresh, apple-cheeked Englishwomen in a picturesque costume and a yet more picturesque hat.

Copyists of these types are numerous on exposition walls, an effort in a later period at a Burne-Jones effect, this manifesting itself in diverse ways. Some exceptions, however, should be made, and in these the artist declares himself unspoiled by popular taste, his chosen specialty legitimate, as in the case of the author of the so-called "Gibson girl," the painter disclosing real imagination, equal to that exhibited by foreign masters in art.

The face of the Gibson girl, indeed, is remarkable, representing an eagerness to lay hold of life, a looking for the rose and finding the thorn, an inarticulate pain at pending

Digitized by Google

flight of youth, dawning experience, and petulant scorn, insubordination to destiny, and withal possibilities after the cataract is past! An interpretation, rare in modern art, this figure, like beauty, has an excuse for being. But the representation is but a single type, it is not national, for as yet America's ideal woman has no existence. Inchoate elements are seen, together with a suggestion of uniform traits, but these are marked by a localism which in modern figure painting, as in the novel, has common sway. For our Eves are under the scalpel knife of curious Adams, who, discovering that they are not madonnas, idealize less than actualize, this done under the exhausted receiver of an extinct faith.

The manifest trend of art toward figure painting in the United States is all the more deplorable, as landscape art should have a peculiar indigenousness in a country where the most prominent productions of literature are imbued with love of nature, these showing the early tendency of imagination in the New World towards the pastoral and undramatic. A fact that, since poet and painter are kin, suggests a scanty soil for the genu-

Digitized by Google

ine figure painter, as scanty indeed as that furnished by Italy for landscape art.

But this brings to the consideration another factor in the cause of preference for figure painting manifested in Italy and at the present epoch in the United States. At the time that the fine arts flourished in Italy it may be remembered that there was a traditional tendency to militarism and its consequent hero-worship.

The Roman people delighted in expressions of the dramatic elements of life; regarding natural phenomena with little interest, an exhibition of human emotion and human force was more desirable. The genius of the people, indeed, declared itself in those representative men the Cæsars, and in an emphasis of a Divine Personality, which was the theme of the Miracle Plays, together with ceremonials rehearsing the Hours of Agony of Christ, these presenting to the excitable populace the figure of a God crucified whereby the mind became inured to cruelty, — as happens indeed to-day in theatrical representations of crime, when emotions, excited by semblances, cease to be alive to actualities, their occurrence no longer occasion of surprised horror

Digitized by Google

at exceptional ferocity, the tenderness of sympathy, falsely excited, destroyed. And these dramatic ceremonies of worship were in harmony with the spirit of militarism dominant in Rome and which was in keeping with the warlike instincts disclosed in the history of the Israelites, that history claimed to be the word of God. And this spirit was not less shown in religious rites than in literature. Virgil sang of arms, Dante of implacable vengeance. The oratory of Savonarola suggested the sword and battlefield, his words, instigating war and revolt, seldom persuasive, his arguments closing in upon the church as with fire and pillage. And so it happened that, a revolutionary in spirit, Savonarola was caught and expired in the conflagration of which he was incendiary.

And was it a necessary martyrdom? Is there not a steady turn of the wheel of progress in the affairs of men, a security that the soul that sinneth it shall die, even as in blight of mother plant the seed is destroyed, — and as with individuals so with nations, while the true and noble partaking of the divine spirit remain?

What need of invectives and abuse, to

Digitized by Google

what purpose incendiary speech, when God is alive and immanent in the world?

To stir up strife in Rome was an easy thing, the Roman laying hold of his sword as readily as his toga, both his daily equipment and equally of common usage. Divisions of families frequent, street fights of common occurrence, patriotism another name for war, this was the bed-rock on which Italian art established itself, and surely it might have been anticipated that the art, impersonal and undramatic, leading to return to the life which conforms itself to the eternal laws of progressive development, would find little encouragement. That polytheistic element to which the Latin race is heir, and which engendered the hero-worship rife in Rome, forbade, indeed, the introduction of an art which is in a large sense Pantheistic, including in that term worship of the divine immanent in nature. For what concern was it to the man whose manhood lived in his sword, and whose emotions were touched alone by affairs immediate and personal, whether dawns came and went, gilding the Alps and transfiguring them? How was that man to gather "the sweet influences of

Digitized by Google

the Pleiades," or perceive the mystic "bands of Orion"? What, indeed, was the beauty of night or day to such as he? Fill then the galleries of art with pictures of heroes of family frays, with heroines of brutal crimes; display muscular force, unconsecrated breasts, and unhallowed nudities; tamper with delicacy and stupefy the sensibility to the true, beautiful, and good — and the instincts that are common to an epoch of militarism are best satisfied.

It has been said that inspiration adopted two prominent methods to express the ideal, the one a portrayal of the human figure, the other a representation of natural phenomena. These two methods of expression hold something of the relations existing between epic and lyric poetry, the one representatively personal, the theme "arms and men," the *dramatis personæ*, heroes, and the other, pastoral, even rhapsodiacal, its theme natural phenomena.

Epic poetry was initiated in a strenuous egoism, nature being subordinated to human nature, and it was this strenuous egoism that inspired the primeval artist to represent divinity in the form of man. At the begin-

Digitized by Google

ning, crude figures were cut in stone, delineated on bark, or painted on the skin of wild animals, these enforcing the idea of personal divinity, an idea that was a very sufficient inspiration to figure drawing surely and which ultimately gave rise to figures of remarkable beauty, these being products of long periods in which a knowledge of inadequacy of skill is evident while there is a constant effort toward more satisfactory expression, this knowledge, shown by the symbols appended declaring the intent and purport of the image. Conscious of failure the primitive skill was put to exercise in the way of addenda, so to speak, and it is notable that while symbols held their place in presentation of divinity, figure drawing remained puerile and crude, for intellectual activity is occasioned by both the demand and the necessity for expression. Supplied with an easy escape from difficult labor, his indolence of mind predisposed the artist to retain traditionary methods from generation to generation. Thence the excessive tardiness of this great achievement, the portrayal of the human form. It may be stated indeed that, in that degree dependence was made on the

Digitized by Google

symbol, the merit of the work gained or lost. This is represented in the history of Greek art, which culminated when extrinsic explanations were discarded, real life determining expression.

The history of the gradual evolution of images of the human form may be compared to the structural development of the human form itself, — this a manifestation of a universal dominance of a constructive agent, the maker of all form, who, in being the creator, has none the less the inertness of matter to overcome, which, retarding the evolution of man from the animal, typifies the gradual development of its image and figurement in art. A comparison that may be carried into detail, for the ideal has its prefigurement in lower animate life, and existing in nature, it exists in human nature. Thence the likeness of concept in primitive expression to the most advanced ideal represented by Greek art, and whence it follows that skill in production, acumen as to appropriate methods of emphasis in contour or movement, are not assurances of a new ideal, these being in fact superficial and even liable to lead to the mechanical and unelastic rendi-

Digitized by Google

tion of the workshop, for the very finish of a marble may destroy trenchancy of expression, since an idea must come hot from the soul, which, indeed, too far from its source like a bolide is extinguished.

And the ideals of the human spirit are ever repeating themselves as are repeated nature's types, which also are hastening toward completeness of expression. Coursing through mineral, vegetal, and animal kingdoms, rising in the hot flood of life, divine energy is one in principle, distinguishable in no case through diversity of channel as a new energy. And of the diverse productions of art the same energy beats up with savage or scholar's pulse. For it may be said that the simple recognition of divinity in humanity through an image of wood or stone, if late or early, if in the age of stone, iron, bronze, or at last of gold, declares an archetypal ideal which is distinguishable through all diversity of representation. An ideal that is present before and after educative influences; a figure which looms up in the imagination of men, a menace or a guerdon, disturbing that lethargy of will which defeats improvement while inciting an increas-

Digitized by Google

ing self-development; a figure that is a representative personality: individualism in the aggregate, the Divine Father of all.

But if the Greeks did not originate while they expressed the ideal, if their figure was the manifestation of a common and universal concept, to them must be ascribed resources of expression that were individual and heretofore unknown.

Greek art achieved victory over dull weight, and in its statues there is a kindred acquisition of power that is also acquired by vegetal life, a power that dominates the force of gravity, as the white-stemmed birch, for example, and by which this Daphne of the woods, rising from the earth to shimmer and sparkle in the sun, sustains itself in opposition to that force, — a force to combat which all resistance must be maintained, either as put forth by skill of man in sculpture of the human figure, or as put forth by the tree. And it is this resistance to the force of gravity, together with an absence of apparent effort, that is characteristic of Greek sculpture. In the Apollo Belvedere every line is contributive to a self-sustained uprightness of posture though the weight is confided to

Digitized by Google

the right foot, the image seemingly but now sprung from heaven to earth, there alighting with easy poise and assuming the majestic aspect of an ideal figure — a Light Bearer, so to speak, prophetic of the vocation of the human spirit.

If the numerous images of the solar gods of Greece were compared with sculptures of Egypt, this apparent freedom from a force dominating marble would be particularly noticeable. The Greek sculptor by a marvelous subtilty, discovering the secret of equilibrium preserved in a buoyancy of movement, — a movement which exists in the statue only by association, — suggests a control over weight surpassing that attained by the human will in locomotion. Contrast this alertness with Egyptian statues, and their solid fixity of attitude assumes the appearance of immobile weight, an appearance, however, purposely made manifest, for these suave sweet-tempered kings of the Nile, inalert, their arms fixed for an eternal repose, their faces turned smilingly to the sun, contentment even in the wide leonine eyes directed to the far horizon, impersonate the ideal of the race, carrying the impression of security in the

Digitized by Google

unvarying sources of life — that life derived from the illimitable resources of solar energy.

But the Egyptian idea of solar energy must not be conceived to be materialistic: it was that of a Ruler of Light who is manifested in the visible universe by light. And a desire for perpetuity held in common with all forms of life, and which in man became a craving for immortality of individual being, gave an emphasis in Egyptian art on the secure and unvarying, this sentiment particularly enforced in the conventionalized portraits of the kings, these rulers of men believed to become sun-gods by a mystic assimilation of the properties of divinity, those properties solarizing the human spirit, it becoming luminous, — "sound and immortal as the sun," to use a phrase of Egyptian scripture. And this view of the godlike, it is evident, gave a different and a distinctive feature to Egyptian expression in art, a rigorous conventionality inducing homogeneity also fixing the presentation of the ideal and thus giving a stability to the national concept, a stability most desirable since perpetuity was the Egyptian's chief object in life. And the attainment of this stable form

Digitized by Google

of the ideal in Egypt is a prominent example of the response of human invention to the demands of the human spirit. Furthermore, it is the force of inventiveness, to which man is heir through his series of forbears, that has given to Egyptian art a unique place in the evolution of expression, — a place impossible to deny it when compared with Greek art. For inalert, gentle, but with an unbending majesty, the statues of Egypt assert the possession of an ideal which appeals by contrast to the restless activity of that modern civilization in which Hellenic ideals have had so great an influence. Greek art, it was said above, by a marvelous subtilty of understanding dominated the inert stone whence there sprang to lifelike form Apollo, god of light; but Egyptian art gave meaning to the inert mass without hiding its tendencies, not seeking to contravene but to abide by natural phenomena; an unlikeness in purpose which characterized the two races, for art is a reflection of the human spirit, presenting visibly its characteristic sentiment together with those prevailing traits and aspirations which make up individualism, this a product and apparent end of human development.

Digitized by Google

VI

BLINDNESS AND VISION

THE Egyptian ideal, represented in art, was based on confidence in perpetuity, that confidence maintained by a belief that uprightness of conduct prevents the disintegration of the soul exactly as conformity to natural laws prevents the disorganization of the solar universe, a belief that contributed to that serenity which is the preëminent sentiment characterizing Egyptian art. The Hellenic ideal, disclosed in Greek art, substituting intellectualism for moral truth, subordinating the rigorous self-rule demanded by Egyptian doctrines to freedom of action, represents the æsthetic rather than the ethical attributes of human nature. Æsthetic tendencies, unless overruled by an ethical sentiment, engender self-gratification, and when based on an idea that all phenomena are transitory it leads to the return to simple animal life, a life which rejoices in the present, hav-

Digitized by Google

ing little concern for the future except after the manner of plants and animals. All examples of prehistoric art in Greece betray this simpler condition, and are illustrative of the sentiment which obtained at that period in Grecian civilization when human nature was in its elemental stage of growth. Of these examples the sculptures upon gravestones are the most representative, these betraying the attitude maintained toward the unseen. For example, that gravestone which was found just inside the famous Lion Gate (above six graves, the so-called pit graves, or shaft graves, of Mycenæ), the sculptures on these stones betraying neither sorrow nor fear, for here is a charioteer driving at full speed, opposed to him a single warrior, whose object seems to be to stay the course of the inmate of the chariot, while immediately above the animal driven is a crescent moon, a symbol that was used at a primitive epoch to illustrate the renewal of vernal together with the resurrection of human life,[1] a most ingenious device, often supplying the place of an epitaph when written language was unknown.

[1] Athens, National Museum. (See *Masks, Heads, and Faces.*)

Digitized by Google

The same security of feeling is betrayed in the so-called Harpy tomb,[1] the sculptures denoting, through the emblems egg, flower, fruit, and a cow suckling her calf (an application of the Egyptian Hathor myth, it is not unlikely), an entire trust in nature's unvarying renewal of the dominant force of life. The same sentiment is exhibited also in the grave monument of Aristion,[2] an example of early Attic sculpture in Pentelic marble, where the figure is that of a warrior with a staff in his hand after the method used in representation of the risen Osiris, lord over the dead in Egyptian portrayal of the resurrection, and in portrait statues, as for example a figure in wood of the Fourth or Fifth Dynasty (2800–2500 B. C., or earlier), this statue,[3] found in the cemetery of Sakkarah, having in his hand a staff as a man of authority and so bearing the name given by Arab workman: Sheikh-el-Beled, that is, the Chief of the Village — a natural interpreta-

[1] London, British Museum. Probably of the sixth century B. C.

[2] Athens, National Museum.

[3] Gizeh Museum; the Louvre; vignettes in the Book of the Dead, and on the sepulchral monuments (Egypt), etc.

Digitized by Google

tion, but too limited when applied to the illustration of the state of the dead, the staff having a similar significance in the hand of the image of the departed that wings appended to mortuary figures now have, both representing power of locomotion and renewed vital force, — that is, resurrection.

The monument of Aristion[1] (of the sixth century) suggests a like method of expression of a belief in resurrection to that employed in Egypt, exhibiting a tranquil security that is the peculiar trait of the sculptures of the Harpy tomb. And this sentiment prevails in all the early mortuary sculpture of Greece, and, indeed, it is but in improved skill of execution that discrimination can be made between early and late periods of mortuary work, the sentiment being the same. The grave relief of Hegeso, of a period two hundred years later than that of Aristion, is pervaded by kindred feeling, for there is no allusion to death, it being a picture, seen as through a doorway, of a woman and her attendant, viewing a necklace taken from its casket. It is at this period there appears to have been a disposition to introduce the

[1] Athens, Dipylon Cemetery.

Digitized by Google

view, common to primitive nations, that the dead continue the vocations of their earthly life, — and this idea doubtless was occasion of selecting some representative act, such as the heroism exhibited by a cavalryman, as in an Attic grave relief (perhaps of the fourth century B. C.).[1] Types all of the Greek method of dealing with subjects relating to the departure of life, in none is betrayed anxiety, or profound grief, or stress on probity of character as in Egypt. The archaic, the prehistoric, and the age of Pericles, periods of literary as also artistic development, are each characterized by a serene independence of fear of death or of grief, a sentiment that is shown in the lineaments of all Greek statues, whether mortuary or temple images, whether the robed "maidens" of the Acropolis, sculptures of the archaic period; whether the gymnast — Discobolus of Myron — of the transitional period, the Semnian Athena, the Caryatides from the Erechtheum, or the bride captured by a centaur, for in all the same expression prevails, which is that of unassailable calm, — the lineaments without individuality and of the national type. Ex-

[1] Rome, Villa Albani.

Digitized by Google

ceptions prove the rule, and this obtains in the sculpture of the sarcophagus termed the mourning women,[1] these figures, through their attitude more than their faces, expressing varying phases of grief. The period of this remarkably beautiful work has been assigned to somewhere near the middle of the fourth century. The sarcophagus is in the form of an Ionic temple; between the columns are the figures of the women, and above the cornice a funeral procession. But the sarcophagus of the mourning women was exhumed on the site of a necropolis of Sidon, in Phœnicia, its locality suggesting influences of diverse character from that which obtained in Athens, as the contrasting sentiment shown by the grave relief of Hegeso also indicates.

It seems to have been contrary to the Greek spirit to represent human sorrow, — that sorrow which is limned on many modern faces. The Caryatides of the Erechtheum bore their burdens grandly, even buoyantly as a woman sportively lifts and tosses her child above her head. There is simplicity, sweetness, serenity, security in the women's faces, — nay, happiness and content; they lived in the

[1] Constantinople.

Digitized by Google

hour, and existed as the plants exist, flowering and passing on to another spring. Thus, light-hearted, Hegeso's thought is on the necklace taken from the casket her attendant has brought, — she seeks to beautify herself, — a Greek, she has æsthetic taste.

Intelligence is an attribute that is compatible to an unethical habit of mind; devoted to reason, it has then none of the quality of the affections, an attribute shared by all animate life, it is typified in the Apollo Belvedere, which bears as little impression of tenderness or compassion as a beam of light, and which, indeed, may be called a light bearer, being representative of that intellectualism which commits the human mind to the exercise of reason, and through which the affections are often subordinated, conditions which are betrayed in the attributes ascribed to Zeus, his emblem the thunderbolt; for power is the god of the intellect, not love!

And love, indeed, becomes a capricious slave in the Greek pantheon, an apotheosis of power insuring its servitude, that power represented by virile paternity impersonated by Zeus, for example, armed with a thunder-

Digitized by Google

bolt, and so giving birth to wisdom or intelligence, — a conception that is suggestive of the trend of Greek thought, for the mythic presentation of Zeus, as the god of thunder, is overlaid by a strata of new ideas, the primitive being simply the concept of a virile physical force, a gigantic man!

The Greek ideal of love began with an apotheosis of motherhood. In the earlier myths it is Cybele (Rhea), daughter of heaven and earth (Uranus and Terra), who is queen and mother of these gods; to her all life is due, Zeus himself is the mighty son of her womb. Women, therefore, play an important rôle in Grecian mythology. Accounts of the chaste Artemis and the invulnerable Athena adorn the verse of Homer and the drama of Æschylus, the more tender note reserved for the celestial goddess, as in the appeal of Prometheus: "O holy mother mine, O ethereal heaven circling round the light of all things, — ye see what I suffer." Adoration of Athena made easy the sacrifice of over a ton of gold for the Athena of the Parthenon, whose inheritance from Zeus, the wielder of the serpent-lightning, fringes her ægis with snakes, sign of wisdom, and sets

Digitized by Google

as protecting hound a coiled snake within her shield.

Perhaps one of the most gracious exhibitions of the sentiment which originally prevailed among the Greeks toward womanhood is found in the group representing Eirene and Plutus, in which the tender turn of the head of the mother toward her august child, destined to be lord of the realms of the dead, is an exhibition of an understanding of the emotions of motherhood, together with its protective care as also prophetic solicitude. This sculpture belongs to fourth century art: originally a bronze work by Cephisodotus it was consecrated in Athens in 375.[1] Plutus, associated with the under-world life, was assumed to rule over the fecundity of nature and therefore is presumed to be the god of plenty, while his mother is the harbinger of an era of peace and plenty, whose image is a noble presentation. The robed figure of Eirene, in this group, is not more expressive of a gracious sentiment! And the inborn reverence for womanhood, possessed by the noble sons of women, among all nations alike, is not more evident than

[1] Munich.

Digitized by Google

in the statues of Artemis, these suggesting personal dignity and intellectual force of character.

As art developed, it is evident, indeed, that outward modesty became a sign of inward chastity, this view the occasion of the curious anachronism shown in sculptures representing scrupulously clothed women beside the nude figure of man, the sensitive ideals of Greece thus a barrier to a sacrifice of the good judgment that has made clothing a factor in civilization. And here it may be said that from present evidences it may be concluded that the nude figures exhumed in Greece were temple statues of goddesses about whom the sheltering walls assumed the office of raiment; the Venus of Melos was designed for a niche in a temple, and it may be conjectured that such was the place occupied by the Aphrodites of Praxiteles if at the period of their production a degenerate spirit had not attacked popular ideals. Praxiteles is distinguished for a surpassing skill in images of Aphrodite, his era intermediary between that of the culmination of art in Greece and its decline. And it is noteworthy that on him appears to fall the

Digitized by Google

responsibility of introducing nude statues into the temples, his most famous figure, the Aphrodite of Cnidus, designed for this purpose, an innovation which, disclosing a lapse from the custom that had long held sway, is of peculiar significance in its relations to the succeeding period of decadent art.

In the primary evolution of art, as shown in mortuary sculpture and shrine images, robed figures are universal, later, demi-robed, and finally the Greek's importunate love of beauty invaded the sanctuary, overcoming the more delicate scruples that are inherent to ethical habits of thought.

The liberal sentiment in Hellenic ideals liberated and gave freedom to the limbs of the historic shrine figure, the arms no longer fixed to the body, feet heavily weighted and as it were adhering to the earth, play of muscle and a daring exhibition of control of equilibrium declaring a revolt against impediments to action, and this accomplished there was aroused a desire not only to idealize but to realize the human form, presenting it as in nature. This ambitious scheme entered upon, it is followed by delineations

Digitized by Google

and representations of forces antagonistic to the calm trust in the law-in-things, these picturing a Nemesis alert to chastise and destroy, as for example the Mænads of Scopas contemporary of Praxiteles.

The Greek, with all his ideality, a child of nature, his gods nature-gods, his worship a refined and transfigured animism, if moved by an inconsequent light-heartedness, now betrays an occasional loss of hope, his buoyancy extinguished as happens with a child startled in its blithe irresponsibleness at appearance of ill-humor in a parent. The great epoch of Greek art was a period of hopeful adolescence, but it betrays the elemental man in process of evolution, the human spirit in nascent development. And not art alone, but Greek literature is a mirror of the play of feeling common to youth, tragedy and comedy equally represented by a Sophocles and an Aristophanes, for example, comedy ever following fast on tragedy's heels, the sentiment aroused by either temporary and evanescent. And elemental human nature, viewed through the medium of Greek literature and art, would almost persuade one to desire a return to an age of

Digitized by Google

evanescent emotion, as do those who prize little the riches of the years with their breadth of experience and that deep feeling which is won at the expense of youth.

But, as suggested, here and there is given a disillusioning hint that this youthful, blithe aspect of Greek life is not so enviable. Earnest comment is hidden in the sculptures of the Centaurs where is seen the cool carelessness of a bride in the ruthless power of ruffian force, together with the stolid physical courage of her rescuer, the Lapith, whose face argues a little less undesirable fate to the rescued, — for the brute instincts of human nature are far in excess of the brutality of a beast.

Sculptures from the temple of Zeus at Olympia, and of allegorical meaning, the Centaurs bear evidence of studies from real life as indisputably as the paintings of Luca Signorelli, and their import is of like bearing in the evolution of art, for Signorelli was inspired by that sense of realism that precipitated the degeneracy of Italian art, a realism which robbed Greek sculptures of their idealism, previously shown in temple statues. And thus it is an easy transition from a con-

Digitized by Google

sideration of these figures (decoration of the pediments of the Doric temple of Zeus in 460 B. C.) to the Pergamean sculptures, particularly that of the Dying Gaul; for the Lapith in his encounter with the Centaur is bitten upon the shoulder, and his stolid endurance is as typical of physical courage as that shown by the Dying Gaul, who, according to Lord Byron, "consents to death and conquers agony," — an interpretation, however, suggestive of a moral courage which is not discoverable in the face of the Gaul. On the contrary, this is an illustration of brute endurance, and the face, with death gathering over its lineaments like a mist, is unthinking, unprophetic, and without fear, like that of an animal overtaken by unexpected defeat when advancing on his antagonist, — so indeed might the Lapith succumb, as unthinkingly, and with no outcries.

It is but necessary to recall the unchecked cries of Homer's heroes when wounded to perceive that this grim endurance was representative of conditions antedating the sensibilities of human nature existing in the poet's age, the purpose of the artist evidently to represent elemental human nature and its close likeness to that of the animal.

Digitized by Google

From the same school of sculptuary in which the Dying Gaul was produced is that phantasmagoria of the battle of the sons of earth and the gods of heaven which decorated the altar found upon the necropolis of Pergamus. And this battle figures the rebellious physical forces in effort to overcome the celestial powers. Designed for a frieze about an altar,[1] it is a powerful illustration of the wild, chaotic contention that exists in human nature when in a state antagonistic to celestial laws, and as there is nothing in the history of the epoch that would consistently appear to evoke the representation (it being the period of Eumenes, Alexander's favorite general), it may be regarded as an inspiration of artistic genius. And if such it may be supposed to illustrate the Hellenistic period of art when ideals in art were becoming debased, shrines given up to nude goddesses, skilled decoration assuming the function of consecrated talent, *genre* productions, with trivial and licentious subjects on every hand, in palaces, private dwellings, and secular places.

A subconscious estimate of world-states is

[1] By some called Satan's throne. Rev. xi. 13.

Digitized by Google

common to highly wrought mentality, and it is easy to fancy the dismay of a genuine artist at the conditions of art in Greece in the second century before our era, and in directing his inspirations toward those high themes treated in the myths of all countries alike, themes descriptive of the fall of man, his lower nature conquering, the artist becomes a revelator and prophet. Thus the Rhodian sculptors represented the degenerate piety of the times by the Laocoön, and the Pergamean sculptures reiterate the theme, these representing revolt and consequent war between celestial and terrestrial powers, both representations suggesting impiety and sacrilege with their consequent punishment. The Laocoön, as presented, is a one-act drama, the hero a priest who has been guilty of sacrilege, and, as if to illustrate the belief in a penal power in the sea quoted on another page respecting the Indian, the artist has portrayed an attack of water snakes upon both the priest and his sons, these snakes being sent by outraged deity to administer punishment. And it is the gleaming, undulating folds of these snakes whereby the sculptor has suggested the gliding stanchless

Digitized by Google

waves of the sea, against whose onward movement there is no barrier, the fixidity of the marble at the same time testifying to the irretrievable misery which contorts the face of the priest, the result of whose impiety includes the punishment of his sons, heirs to his guilt. The great significance of this sculpture lies in the fact that at a decadent period of art it points to causes that are traceable as occasion of that decadence.

The sensuous seeks to dethrone the supersensuous whence is its own preservation, and the consequence of this desire has ever been the theme of art. It is, indeed, so universal a theme that imagination might portray the sculptors of Rhodes or of Pergamus exclaiming in the words of Lucretius in reference to mythic stories: "O miserable race of men, when they ascribed such things to the gods, and coupled them with bitter wrath! What groanings for themselves did they beget, what tears for our children's children!" (v. 1194).

The gloss of an adroit but superficial idealism long covered the decay of the delicate and penetrative genius of Greek art, that decay occasioned by a sacrifice of truth to beauty, of candor to external graces. Truth lies at

Digitized by Google

basis of Hebraic character, as witnessed by the impolitic denunciations of the prophets, and it is a bald plainness of expression in their scripture that impressed Christian art, inspiring the hands of Orcagna, Fra Bartolommeo, and Michael Angelo. Subterfuge, indeed, is ineradicably opposed to the fundamental principles of Christianity, and this is evident in the sincerity which pervades the lives of its most zealous devotees, the Puritans, for example, whose strenuous love of truth inclined them to a pitiless condemnation of innocent disguises, to whom, indeed, beauty was a decoy from that integrity which is the result of unswerving adherence to truth, an excess of heedfulness to the latter causing an abrogation of the relations between truth and beauty established in nature and consequently necessary to human nature, — there being no ugly truth. But it is evident that there is more danger to the preservation of the human soul through love of beauty to the exclusion of truth, than love of truth to the exclusion of beauty. Subterfuges, concealment of actualities, to the end of assuaging ruffled sensibilities produced in the Hellenes characteristics that

Digitized by Google

were summarized in the phrase, "the wily Greeks," — their foes finding it difficult to meet so covert an enemy, one who was full of strategy and labyrinthine devices. The diversity in temperament between the Greek and Roman, the one specious, wise, and wily, the other direct, uncompromising, and heroic, explains the otherwise unexplainable efflorescence of Christianity in Rome in advance of Athens. And it is in these examples of the effect of the genius of diverse people that is shown the destiny of individuals with like traits — *ab uno disce omnes.*

The æsthetic Greek, always heedful of sentiment and increasingly enamored with beauty, fell away from the regal splendor of the Phidian sculptures by a gradual process of spiritual degeneracy, truth being necessary to the preservation of art, as it is of the soul, disintegration following its absence.

It is this tendency, even in the most perfect examples of Greek art, that denies it place in the Christian temple without modifications, for however sacred the purpose of the image, it falls easily into the position of secular adornment. Moreover, it is this decorative quality, discoverable in Greek art

Digitized by Google

by its appropriateness in adornment of secular buildings, that betrays its limitations as an exponent of the ideals of the human spirit at the present epoch, thence the revolt against classicism in France, and an effort in England and Germany to revive the sentiment of early Christian art as presented in Italy. Fervor was needed, and not that which is felt by the joy in beauty by itself and separated from its dual truth, the union between which produces the good as sunlight and shower produce the flower.

But the growth of art, as of the human spirit, is as opposed to turning back as the stem of a tree to return to its roots, and it was impossible for even the most zealous advocate of Pre-Raphaelism to become a Botticelli.

Modern ideals demand neither Greek nor Gothic nor Italian art for expression. This is observable in its numerous failures to represent the crucifixion. At the period when this scene of sacrifice was universal to art a pagan element remained in ideas of deity, and the act to common thought memorialized the ancient human sacrifice instituted to placate the gods, in place of illus-

Digitized by Google

trating an heroic gift of life for truth's sake, the moral triumph suffering an eclipse by means of misinterpretations discreditable to human reason. Other misapprehensions also enfeebled the expression of art. On one hand there was the demand to represent divinity, on the other humanity. Thus Rubens's Christ was conceived in Titanic proportions, and Dürer's Christ, delicate and spirituelle. Rubens's virile presentation, while an improvement upon the lymphatic representations of an earlier school of painters, is a type, however, belonging to tradition. Escaping from the appearance of feebleness, his figure is an exaggeration of ascribed power, an exaggeration that characterizes Michael Angelo's expression of the heroic, which defect is observable in this artist's figure of the Creator on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, this, while structurally accurate, being in sentiment a primitive anthropomorphic deity, an image little more adequate than some characterizations of Jupiter. And Michael Angelo's failure here is that which befell all artists attempting to portray deity, either dying or living. For in humanizing the image of a deity it is necessary to indi-

Digitized by Google

vidualize, — a momentous task, and which in all cases alike has resulted in giving a predominance to some one characteristic rather than fusing all attributes ascribable to deity into a whole and so in a concrete image representing the absolute and universal. And this common failure of expression through images of deity, showing art's inadequacy, is emphasized as skill developed. Believed to have been manifest in Christ, and a veritable personality, some preferred characteristic unwittingly was chosen by the artist whereby to represent the unlimited and absolute.

But if this limitation of expression is evident in Christian art, it must be remembered that it is a limitation common to imagination, for although remarkable for breadth of ideality, Greek art was incapable of presenting deity without predominance of some single characteristic; the Zeus Otricoli has the leonine traits that are suggestive of physical force rather than intellectual, this characterizing Apollo, thus each image presents some special attribute. But together with this common limitation in expression shown in both Hellenic and Christian art a

Digitized by Google

more comprehensive individualization, in fact, was on the eve of development at the period when a single attribute seemed to satisfy the common conception of an ideal, and this among those who attempted an image of deity in Christ. But this, if increasingly comprehensive, must not be identified with Greek breadth; it was not impersonal. The sentiment of the age was opposed, indeed, to an idealism that swept away the personal and individual, and for the reason that man was becoming more individual himself. Thus it happened that Michael Angelo, notwithstanding his evident admiration for Greek art, and his careful study of its principles, manifests little of its peculiar breadth in representation of deity, his strong individuality forbidding assimilation of that which was foreign to its higher development. Indeed, suggestive of growth, of testing to impatience methods heretofore unapplied, Italy's representative artist discloses a tendency toward scientific pursuits, for do we not find him entering the chamber devoted to the dissection of the human body, a lamp affixed to his cap, while he dissects that masterpiece of nature, the latest production

Digitized by Google

of creative energies, so insuring a definite knowledge whereby to represent the image of man? But having attained this knowledge, did he produce the ideal of Christianity? On the contrary, his imagination is engaged on other themes, and those in which his own masterful individuality was at ease, his fervid imagination hurrying him to multiply his products as nature increases her progeny in the tropics, — this haste, however, never compelling him to leave his productions without a well understood response from the marble to the inspired chisel; for, if incomplete, the virgin mass cloven from the mountain side still clinging about the unreleased figure, his idea was there, lifting itself to sight in all the majesty of inspired vision, as in his Night and Dawn, for instance. And this masterful individuality of Michael Angelo's, shown in each new work, if the subject were drawn from Scripture, the theme, for example, the Last Judgment, ever betrayed itself, for it was evident that no Raphaelesque sweetness of temperament could project this tumultuous vision, or body forth like passions of human nature, these passions evoked by excess of joy or depth of

Digitized by Google

despair. His individuality betrayed in the exposition of his theme, it was also disclosed in the selection; hence it might not be anticipated that he would be able to grasp the new ideal, that being Christ. Comprehensive as was his genius he must fail in this, since his temperament partook of the militant spirit of Rome, which was in sympathy with that of the Israelites, this likeness of sentiment obviously destructive to a concept of the ideals of the New Era. The ideal demanded by Christianity, indeed, was above the apprehension of both the early and late masters of art, the most advanced interpreters, Michael Angelo, Leonardo, and Titian, unable to conceive it in its entirety, each artist, on the contrary, controlled by his individual point of view, impressing his conception with his own personality. Thus in conformity with these limitations the representations were designated by the artist's name, as, for instance, Leonardo's Christ, Titian's Christ, Dürer's Christ, Rubens's Christ, and the rest, — the personality of the artist so far impressed upon the image that by common consent it was recognized permanently in his ideal. But if this is true

Digitized by Google

respecting the personifications that were attempted, it is of interest to note that in the above list a Michael Angelo's Christ does not appear, and although it is a list which includes the most satisfying representations of the time. It is significant that Michael Angelo's most beautiful representation is not one that may be characterized even as an ideal figure of Christ, this being that dead lad upon his mother's knees in the chapel of St. Peter's, — a figure that no other artist could have produced, for only Michael Angelo knew through experimental knowledge the full meaning of the helplessness of death, this knowledge conveying, however, the real meaning of death, — its final release and blessing. Thus, if this artist seemed to lack power of idealization, if he could not produce an ideal as satisfactory as the Olympic Zeus, for instance, which delighted the Greek populace, — the people, hastening to the temple at the news of its completion, traversing long distances for the purpose, counting him unfortunate who had not seen the image, — he could give a representation which conveyed a fact of the greatest importance in consideration of the tragical end of Christ's ministry:

Digitized by Google

death was a release to Christ, however ignominious. Moreover, the martyr is not always he who dies, but he who survives, — a point of view to which Michael Angelo has given a new sentiment while at the same time he has centred the interest on the enduring grief of motherhood in loss of a son. And it is in this interpretation of the great tragedy that Michael Angelo wins the higher place among his compatriots in art. He did not accept the conventional, but took an individual point of view.

The sacrifice of love is a preëminent characteristic of motherhood, universal to lower and higher animate life, its possibility inherent in bird and beast; it is the great passion whence comes the mingled joy and anguish of existence, the anguish when the sacrifice is impossible being greater than that of death. An anguish which impoverishes life of its sources of interest, it gives to the human mother's face that impassive expression that Michael Angelo has rendered in the face of the Madonna of the Chapel. And this dejection suggests that this mother was the true martyr, her heart pierced by the sword of lasting grief. For this figure,

Digitized by Google

to which the artist has given the expression of an irreparable sorrow together with a majesty excelling all other representations of the mother of Christ, emphasizes the release of death contrasted by a life divested of its supreme motive. And thus a monument suggesting the abiding power of sacrifice that exists in motherhood in nature, — for what hunter, among even the most ferocious of beasts, has not witnessed that power and willingness of sacrifice? — and also a monument to motherhood in human nature, this representation, like the ecclesiastical apotheosis of Mary, appeals to all humanity; — it is an example where the demand of the church was met by the comprehensive vision of the laymen. Moreover, its force of meaning shows the prevision of that church, for the worship of motherhood is a natural instinct, fundamental to all animate life, and a cornerstone in an ecclesiastical organization, it provides a secure foundation to its universality of influence.

Michael Angelo's genius seemed to be under the sway of two influences: at one time truth is his inspiration, at another he is led by tradition, a semi-pagan element show-

Digitized by Google

ing itself, as in the scene of the Last Judgment, where muscular power is not less enforced than in Assyrian sculptures, or in the Pergamean marbles, for example, emphasizing the muscle and brawn of that brute force inherited by man, agonies of contrition were disclosed by contortions of the body suggesting physical pain. A literal representation of a scene that was calculated to induce fear addressed to an ignorant mind, it is a noteworthy example of a reproduction of barbaric concepts, concepts that strikingly contrast with those which are expressed in the Last Judgment of the Egyptian. For in that scene there is presented views that appeal at once to reason, the *dramatis personæ* representative of the truth, an impersonation of which is presented viewing a scale of justice in which the heart of man is tested by the weight of truth. And man, a judge over himself, sits enthroned bearing the badge of truth, while Wisdom takes down the record as given by truth.

And this act occurs in the presence of all the gods of light in the Egyptian pantheon, these arrayed with their badges of truth around the court of trial, so hedging it about

Digitized by Google

and enforcing the fact that the judgment is in the light of truth. The locality is in the heavens, as in Michael Angelo's picture, but among the stars, these a manifestation of those cosmic laws of the universe that determine planetary regularity and also the destiny of man, both stars and man existing since truth exists.

In fact, the Egyptian scene of judgment is a representation of the abiding power of truth — truth maintains order and perpetuates existence — orderliness is godlikeness, without which is disorganization and chaos. Thus, his destiny dependent on orderliness, man's acts condemn or justify him, these acts tested in the light of truth, the impersonation of which bears no evidence of being moved by any sentiment except that of dispassionate inquiry and in which man is chief judge. He alone has empire over his life, as shown by his imperial crown and regal badge (that of the truth), for "*the truth shall make you free!*"

And too great emphasis cannot be laid on this judgment scene: illustrating the doctrine of the Egyptian sages, it presented that doctrine in an unmistakable form, the redu-

Digitized by Google

plication of the emblem of truth showing that this attribute alone is arbiter of the soul's destiny. The contrast of this scene and that of Michael Angelo's picture of the Last Judgment is as great as that between the doctrines of the Jews and Egyptians in respect to divinity; and the effect of the doctrines of the former, as set forth on the ceiling of a Christian church, is made evident in the temper of the artist, who has pilloried, so to speak, an inimical monk among the damned, an unrelenting desire on the part of the painter (as in the case of Dante) to have vengeance on a foe, and that a lasting vengeance, such as was attributed to deity in judgment of the sinner, a concept derived from barbaric notions that did not discriminate between a persistent moral force and the supposable decrees of a vengeful god.

But Michael Angelo's genius, if at one time influenced by tradition, when under the sway of distinctly intellectual themes shows an unbiased grasp of his subject, as for instance in his representation of the Hebraic bards and prophets, in which his personalization is never at fault. For in the diversity of characterization here maintained is seen

Digitized by Google

that careful analysis of the effect of mental traits on physiognomy which could be made only by one who studied the laws of cause and effect and also knew that immediate conjunction of spirit and matter, body and soul, which is occasion of response of lineaments to personal character, this response shown in diversity of faces. But here it may be asked, if it was possible to characterize the prophets and bards through a process of analysis which took into consideration the effect of mental traits and the laws whence their effect, why might it not be possible to characterize Christ, why fail in the image of the Christian ideal? This question can be answered only by an understanding of the limitations of the painter's genius, a limitation suggested by Michael Angelo's representation of deity as considered above, this a misconception that bears the impress of his individual temper, for Michael Angelo's ideal was an apotheosis of power, — of a god of vengeance. This ideal possessing his soul, he was incompetent to represent Christ, whose character is illustrated by the doctrines included in the Beatitudes. Michael Angelo's genius, indeed, forbade contempla-

Digitized by Google

tion of these doctrines while it prompted the study of the prophets and the reproduction of those lineaments which betray the storm and stress of great intellectuality together with an experience of the persistent force of moral law (a law indistinguished from the decrees of a god of vengeance). For as happens in the history of private individuals, the great artist selected as his guide that portion of biblical literature which suited his temperament, and therefore that representation of deity in the picture of the creation.

The Hebraic race, peculiar in power of expression through imagery of thought, supplies no work of plastic art that is a record of their ideal, hence the diversity of presentation of deity from cover to cover of the Old Testament, the growth of intelligence marked by change of emphasis on imagined attribute. For plastic art has a tendency to fix the ideal in the mind beyond power of development, so hindering both the growth and exercise of individual sentiment, a tendency that was not acceptable to a people who were ready to bring their god to judgment, accusing and cursing him, as did the

Digitized by Google

afflicted Job, and among whom personal diversity of character gave that diversity that has made their literature the text-book of civilization, a literature in which individualization is apparent in conception of deity as also in every psalm, every lamentation, every song of praise, — personal emotion striking a chord in the heart by its appeal to personal sympathy.

And this individualization, this apartness, this "treading the wine-press alone," this creating one's own ideal, — destiny of the representative man as also the representative race, — marked the Hebraic face, the Saul-like violence of feeling ploughed into its lineaments, so to speak, an effect whence there is no escape, the body being clay and the soul the potter. This peculiarity to genius, the representative of his family and his race, is not developed in the Egyptian race, for example, whose individuality is evasive and slightly marked, there being few striking facial lines that distinguish one person from another, the racial type common to all disclosing that the single individual was an undivergent integer of the race correspondingly as the leopard is but an integer of its class, its traits undif-

Digitized by Google

ferentiated from a stereotyped pattern. A homogeneous race, the Egyptian seem to have arrived at some final development, when, as in the ripeness of age, there is only one door, that of the grave, whence to issue into renewed activity; but the Hebraic race, tumultuous, impassioned, jealous, with a "jealous god," having extended their national usefulness through their sacred literature, remain yet a factor to be reckoned with. And considered from the standpoint where Michael Angelo's interpretation aids the judgment, it may be said that it is in the evolution of force of individual character that its influence is most palpably felt, showing that individuality is a permeant if a limiting attribute when fully developed. Furthermore, may it not be said that the persistent moral force representatively exemplified in the Hebraic scriptures — this persistent force forbidding sloth in nature and human nature, demanding activity in universal life physical and moral — is the strenuous current promoting civilization? The ancient Hebrews were dominant egoists, their intelligence directed to acquisition of power, hence their predilection to war and their curious

Digitized by Google

attitude of criticism on neighboring peoples whose gods were designated as inferior to their god, though both were war-gods! The representative Hebrew of the Old Testament, indeed, steeled himself against the neighbor with tribal jealousy and this trait occasioned hostility toward neighborly charity. His god was not his neighbor's, nor was he to be shared with him, hence the doctrines of Christ were most obnoxious, wounding to a deeply seated pride of precedence. Christ possessed the Hebrew's force of character, and, tenacious of purpose, he was in fact a representative scion of this unique race.[1] A prophet like those most illustrious in a long line of prophets, he had the fearlessness of Isaiah, whose visions seven hundred and sixty years before were replete with forcible imagery and burning patriotism; denunciatory of pride, they depict devastation, followed by renewal, "Jerusalem rejoicing, her people a joy." And Christ's language discloses a conversance with nature, — his imagery drawn from natural phenomena as was that of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and lastly Malachi, whose turgid eloquence breathes

[1] St. John iv. 22.

Digitized by Google

of a profoundly stirred spirit besieged with hurrying visions, now of violence, then of peace. But while like those prophets his language is rich in natural imagery, and also epigrammatic, his denunciations as fearless and uncompromising, there is a new element in his doctrines which was subversive to the cherished claim of Judaism, this the doctrine of the universality of divinity.[1] Christ's God was the God of humanity, or more strictly God in humanity.

A divergence from the older tribal exclusiveness, this idea assumed as correct, the statement that he and God were one naturally followed. And Christ announced his opinions after the fashion of his forbear, David, dogmatically and without appeal to other authority than that of his own convictions. It is in this method that may be discovered the bitter hate which he evoked. A reformer, he did not abate his breath, but denounced a culprit with biting sarcasm, taking his similes from examples provided by nature as had the prophets of old, so insuring their unquestionable force of meaning. Never tentative in speech, but always

[1] St. John iv. 24; xiv. 20.

Digitized by Google

trenchant, his parables were as apt as they were admirable. And identifying himself with the principle of truth, he maintained the attitude of one with authority, practicing no abasement but holding himself as sovereign by right of a surpassing wisdom.

Reannouncing doctrines that had previously been promulgated, his energetic exemplification of these doctrines in applying them in ministry to the needy was original, as is perceived by comparison with Buddha, whose doctrines contain some of the tenets taught by Christ. For while the ministry of both incited purity of conduct and gave evidence of desire to ameliorate the conditions of the suffering, compassion on the part of one prompted recoil from the sight of sorrow, while of the other it demanded aid and self-sacrifice; the former affording calm enjoyment and a prolonged life, the latter a brief life and tragical death. Furthermore, Buddha systematically practiced self-effacement, but Christ waited on self-development and in maturity of manhood entered on an energetic ministry, the imperialistic power of which suggests the culminating strength of that persistent moral force

Digitized by Google

which had come down an inheritance from the inspired representative men of his race.

Self-effacement is unnatural and contrary to the action of the law of that development which is shown in the lower animate world, a law that bids the plant fuse its characteristics in the flower, product of self-emphasis through self-development. Representative men are the flowers of the race, as also of their family, and they are products of self-development, not self-effacement. Is it not the exercise of individual force of character that is at base of all advancement?

Christ, if he dreamed, also lived! He was conscious within himself of that energy which permeates the universe, rehabilitating as also creating. Actualizing his tenets, he claimed the Truth, the Way, the Life, and his zeal transmitted, his followers also imbibed the truth, finding the way. The truth demands the exercise of personal will; bestowing self-reliance, it determines the character. Moreover, the greater the will the greater the character, — so evident is this, it is a metaphor of speech when speaking of a representative man in exercise of his powers against obstacles, "He has an iron will!"

Digitized by Google

The application of the will develops individuality; Christ is an example of an unbending will, and therefore his marvelous personality surpassing that of the saintly Buddha, who atrophied his will by subjection to a vagary, that being the belief that happiness lies in an unlaborious resignation, a belief that is an insidious disintegrant to individual force, and which acted upon by plant, animal, or man would compass their ultimate ruin.

The truth is a form-maker, as may be seen by its influence upon the lineaments of the human face, these becoming decisive and firm, whereas, in the absence of truth, those lineaments lapse, becoming shifty and weak. The exercise of the will founded on truth has filled the pages of history with annals of thrilling heroism, and it is through these annals representative men are recognized in their true character, true of representative men, true of the Christ. We know him by his deeds! And through these the artists finally sought to present the Christian ideal, failing in traditional methods.

It is this method which gives to the works of Titian and others of his period their last-

Digitized by Google

ing interest. But it was left to a modern artist to carry out this method to a complete demonstration of the life of Christ and its purpose. This artist (M. Tissot) has given more prominence to the life than to the figure of Christ, for although not failing in its presentation with due regard to its prominence as an indication of the majestic power within, it is evident that interest is invoked upon what Christ did rather than how he looked. But no eye can be indifferent to the portrait at the beginning of the illustrations presenting his career, it being as individual as are the series of portraits of the prophets by Michael Angelo, for the moral fibre, so to speak, of the race represented in Michael Angelo's work is also represented by M. Tissot. The lineaments of this face, indeed, is the Hebraic physiognomy idealized, it being neither æsthetic and pagan, nor Italianesque, but individual while racial; expressive of an inexorable will as also inexhaustible compassion, it is suggestive of strength and tenderness.

And to return to this portrait after viewing the scenes of Christ's ministry is to discover that it is the keynote of the strenuous

Digitized by Google

chords struck in the various acts. It is evident, indeed, that these scenes, matchless in their evidence of a penetration of character and depth of tenderness, were possible only to the life of one whose eyes have just such steadfastness, whose brow is marked with the same evidence of thought, and whose mouth is closed with like firmness.

This striking individualism in the person of Christ, which the portrait of Tissot has so ably represented, is indeed the new ideal, for it impersonates a persistent moral force — a creative, humane power, ennobling mankind — humanizing the animal, divinizing men.

What Tissot accomplished with such discrimination and force in this portrait of Christ prepares the mind for two remarkable scenes in the life, these showing both resourceful imagination and judicious reserve. The first of these is taken from the parable of the blind. In this picture every face tells a story of helplessness, the groping hands or those clutching at a neighbor bearing witness to the sightless eyes, while as if linked together by a galley chain the blind men wend through the wood, the foremost bent, and

Digitized by Google

with hands impotent and gropingly thrust out, followed by those behind, their common woe their chain.

An example of realism in art, there is none the less an appeal to imagination which demands that the sightless physical eyes should but figure the unseeing spirit of the children of men, and thus the artist, if inspired by Maeterlinck's drama of "The Blind," has given a profounder pathos to this the great tragedy among human woes by suggesting one even greater, that extinguishing the light of the soul.

The contrast between these linked figures in helpless insecurity and those who have linked their hands in the last communion — disciples and Master — is a fitting illustration of the opposite condition of blindness and vision which is the common experience of human nature at various stages of life.

And it is in this picture is intimated the supreme force of Christ's magnetic personality, a personality distinguished for its originality if marked by racial traits, and so far surpassing the experience of human nature that its image has eluded all artistic presentation from the dawn of Christianity to

Digitized by Google

the present epoch. And now its presentation is a return to the method adopted wittingly by Egypt, and unwittingly by the Greeks, this being the idealized physiognomy of the race whence sprang the personage represented!

Between the covers of the Old and New Testaments is traced the lineaments of Christ, and his face is delineated in his life as the face of God is mirrored in natural phenomena.

Digitized by Google

VII

NATURAL IMAGERY

OBSERVATION of the traits of birds appears to have been the foundation of the language used by Egyptian scribes. So numerous, indeed, are the figures of birds on monument and papyrus Herodotus was justified in denominating these hieroglyphics "a bird-language." And, as in ancient Egypt, birds have ever been used as a means of expression of thought, the species selected becoming a type of national or religious sentiment. The eagle, for example, is seldom absent from figures of speech when undaunted courage is the theme; but it is noteworthy that while an acknowledged symbol of courage, that courage is not a moral sentiment, and it is this heed to the character of the bird that may be taken as an example of the nicety of choice common to natural imagery. The eagle is indeed a representative type of unscrupulous valiancy. He has a habit of

Digitized by Google

gaining his ends by means that are little short of arrant dishonesty. If he discovers a kingfisher hovering over a lake, he rises swiftly beyond sight and awaits, in apparent indifference, circling in the dim ether; but on the instant that the fisher plunges upon its smooth gliding prey he drops like a thunderbolt, seizing the prize from the fisher's beak amid well deserved maledictions screamed forth by his escaping and unwilling peon. This form of courage is instinct with self-love, presenting the brutal side of animal life, and as an emblem in a figure of speech or national escutcheon this meaning is covertly conveyed, the selection an evidence of the easy acceptance of that example in nature which illustrates the predatory instincts of human nature.

Like the hawk, the eagle seeks living prey, but unlike that bird it cannot be reduced to even comparative subjection, for a wounded bird, helpless but for care of keeper, will seize and tear the hand that offers it a caress. The contrast between the eagle's disposition and that of the dove — both used as a means of expression in symbolism[1] —

[1] That the dove, known in ecclesiastical symbolism as an

Digitized by Google

is marked by their diverse attitude towards man, for the one if not actually inimical is unapproachable, the other builds its nest even in proximity to human habitation and by this supreme surrender shows a confidence and amiability that is by no means displayed by the eagle, who, on the contrary, builds its nest far away from human habitation, having neither confidence in nor liking for mankind. And this nest is no dainty covert; brutal in its habits, the eagle is without sense of beauty, and therefore the structureless pile of sticks arranged only with due regard for the safety of the twin eaglets, while the place of the nest is as clear an indication of the exclusive nature of the eagle as its avoidance of the habitations of men, this usually being in some barren district high up on an inaccessible side of a mountain amid bristling furze, the shaggy growth common to tem-

emblem of the Holy Ghost, had some prehistoric meaning is evident, since in a scene pictured upon a plaque found at Rhodes where the combat between Menelaus and Hector is represented, a figure of this bird is a conspicuous object on the shield of the latter. And it will be remembered that the dove was associated with the Argonauts, the direction of its flight a guide to the course pursued in search of the Golden Fleece.

Digitized by Google

pest-breeding regions. Here, nourished at the fountain-head of chainless winds, the offspring develop those traits of ferocity that appall the worshiper in nature's temple. And the eaglet's is a slow growth, extending over a period of three years, so tasking, although never exhausting, that patience which is characteristic of parental instinct, a prescient instinct which commands continuity of species in plant, bird, or man. But even the eagle has its play hour, as is the case with all birds and animals, their recreations occurring at dawn or evening, and as the sun rises or sets the pair may be observed soaring above the scene of their labors, rising higher and higher in the azure vault where they swing without throb of wing, secure and inaccessible as the planets are. From these habits, and a dauntless as also ferocious courage, the eagle was adopted as an emblem of Zeus and Jupiter, these gods ideals of virile physical force. And thus an emblem of ruling power it became a sign of national puissance, whence its use by warlike nations. But universal as this application of the emblem, there is a rare exception, and that among a barbaric people. The Pueblo In-

Digitized by Google

dians captured the young and nourished them for the purpose of obtaining the downy feathers so remarkable for their delicacy of structure, these to be used in ceremonials as a vehicle of supplication and to represent the "soul's body," [1] a custom suggesting the use of the ostrich's plumes among the Egyptians for the purpose of representing an attribute, that of truth, this attribute deified, and denominated the god of truth. Thus, description failing in the effort to present the idea of a soul embodied, as also to express the preëminence of truth, these two peoples resorted to natural imagery, an imagery that in being drawn from a similar object discloses the peculiar tendency of their minds. Moreover, it is apparent that that tendency is dissimilar to that of the Greeks and Romans, a fact that is more and more marked, particularly when the motive of Egyptian and Greek symbolism is analyzed.

Egyptian symbolism is introspective, for symbols were used to express human and divine attributes and principles, which are in fact those forces on which form depends. And thus the images applied in the scrip-

[1] Report of Hemenway Expedition. Dr. Fewkes.

Digitized by Google

tures of Egypt lead at once to the contemplation of the cause and relation of things. Greek art, exponent of the Greek mind, testifies a less intimate association with the principle omnipresent in nature, — that principle the immanent psychic force and motor of natural phenomena, — dealing rather with the externalities; being increasingly infatuated with the visible and tangible phenomena of life, its application of imagery drawn from nature is seldom abstruse but directed to the easy interpretation of common understanding. This is particularly true when archaic art gave way to that final expression of Greek genius in the Periclean Age (400–500 B. C.). It is at this period and the succeeding decline of virility in Greek art that the eagle symbol assigned to Zeus is used more especially to commemorate success in war.

Assumed as the palladium of the Athena of the Parthenon, its wings rising from the shoulders of an image of Victory, it is a significant illustration of the meaning attached to the symbol when that statue of Athena stood like a tower of defense upon the apex of the temple. As it was employed as a

Digitized by Google

signal of power in the accoutrement of Athena, so was it used in the sculpture by Pæonius, a votive offering of the Messenians for successes gained in war, this image of Victory, seemingly borne up by an eagle, being a goddess of Zeus's court whose apparent descent from heaven is as light as that of the eagle when swooping down upon its prey. But this figure gives little of that eager rush when the prey is a disputed possession, as shown in the Victory of Samothrace,[1] so called, and believed to be commemorative of a naval battle between Demetrius and Ptolemy (306), the success of the former demanding a votive offering.

The application of the eagle emblem in these sculptures is similar to that in the representations of Zeus, the purpose being an expression of supreme power. Furthermore, the emblem of a sovereign divinity, it is safe to say, is an exponent of the sentiment of the people, — it betrays their notion of the most admirable attribute ascribable to supreme power.

The two employments of the Greek people, to the exclusion of nearly all others, were war

[1] Louvre, Paris.

Digitized by Google

and games. Their life was an unmeditative life, the externals occupying their attention, whence the palpable difference in application of the traditional symbol of the eagle and that of the unwarlike and obscure Pueblo Indians who developed an introspective tone in their mythology, — a tone which is peculiarly oriental and suggestive of the mythic ideas of the early Buddhists as also the philosophy of the priests of Sais.

The emblem of divinity in India is a flower, a lily having an undisputed ascendency in the symbolism used in Buddhistic art and literature. But this is not so in Egypt, the same flower, applied to decorative art and used to identify goddess from god, is subordinated to the hawk as a means of more comprehensive illustration. The hawk indeed is Egypt's most conspicuous bird emblem; it was carried by the devastating Egyptian army into foreign lands as a palladium, and if it died during the expedition the body was returned for sepulchre among the bodies of the kings of Egypt, itself embalmed with equal solicitude.

Symbol of valiancy, the hawk became an emblem of the soul triumphant in death; so

Digitized by Google

consecrated it was delineated upon the monuments of the kings, there dignified by the title of the "Soul-name," — a title explanatory of the fact that the king had joined the suite of Horus, the so-called Hawk god, — that is, the god of dawn.

Horus, as the god of dawn, was the lord of resurrection, that is, an impersonation of perpetuity of being, and all representations of him are remarkable for delicacy of expression; as the mythic Dawn Child he is represented rising from a lotus flower, these representations, poetic and refined, suggesting that some other attribute was ascribed to the hawk than that which its best known traits would indicate, and it is not without significance that Africa may claim a most unique specimen of the hawk species (*Melheirax musicus*), this hawk possessing a song that is melodious and delicate, and as this song marks the dawn and setting sun it is not unlikely that the musical hawk was the particular species whence was selected an emblem for Horus, using it also for a descriptive name to be applied to the soul.

Power of description failing among primitive men some bird was commonly used to

Digitized by Google

express ideas of the human spirit, but seldom were they of the predaceous families, — the dove, for example, was set free over the grave of the dead by the Huron Indian, so presumably giving wing to the escaping soul. And in consequence of a too rigorous fast it was claimed by another tribe of Indians that a lad's soul took on the shape of a robin and thus flew away. But these examples might be multiplied, the selection always of an amiable bird, wherefore it may be assumed that Egypt selected the more amiable and attractive species of the hawk family, this a singer, and consequently a marvel among its tribe, especially since the bird was designed to represent immortal life together with the god of dawn (Horus). A conclusion that is safe even though song, as plumage and color, did not dictate the selection of birds for expression of ideas and beliefs in Egyptian text, habits being more typical of character directing their consecration. This is notably apparent in the use of the hawk's eye to represent contemplation, a selection induced, it is likely, from the steady gaze and contemplative mien of the hawk on perch, a representation of which attitude is

Digitized by Google

indeed of frequent occurrence in Egyptian writing.

The contemplative mien of the hawk is greatly emphasized by its remarkable stillness on perch when its long wings seem to inclose it as a mantle while its eyes are steadily regardful of what occurs in the field of vision, — this attitude accented if the bird is engaged in instructing a fledgeling, for the younger bird imitates the elder in the repose of his attitude, and both have the appearance of profound meditation in comparison to which the owl's meditativeness is poor mimicry.

The different species of the hawk provided the Egyptian symbolist with representation of prowess in war, gentle delight, and contemplation, and if, as it is likely, there was some primitive totemic sacredness attached to the emblem, this heritage did not bear heavily upon advancing intelligence, since the species provided such breadth of application.

Many criticisms were made among the Greeks as to the adaptability of certain birds and animals for expression of ideas so set forth, but the most advanced critics vis-

Digitized by Google

iting the Delta of the Nile, as Phædo claims, coming with a spirit of disdain forgot to ridicule when explanations were given.

This result it is probable followed the general ridicule of the selection of the vulture to represent divine maternity, this including the rebirth of the human soul, — for when considered as a type of that force which creates living substances out of dead matter, assuming the bird's power to assimilate dead prey an example of that force, the emblem is appropriate enough.

The vulture's breadth of wing adapted itself to decorative art very effectively, and upon the ceilings of the temples of Egypt are the first examples of wing decorations so used.

In the text of Egyptian scripture this bird is seen together with the hawk; here also a large number of aquatic birds, the "Walkers," and the "Chick," the eggs, as also unfledged birds within a nest, some occult meaning given to their number, that being three, to which emphasis was given later by a picture of three birds walking abreast, this a continuance of the description of the soul's state in course of development, for it must be remembered that according to Egyptian belief

Digitized by Google

the soul at the time of death is not in a developed state more than is the chick in the new-laid egg.

But it is evident that it is quite impossible to realize the force of these illustrations unless an actual acquaintance is made with the birds and animals of Egyptian scripture; this acquired, however, amazement at the aptness of the analogy inclines one to reconsider opinions condemnatory of the methods used, as in the case of the Greek critic. And indeed to condemn the method is to cast censure upon all speech respecting matters appertaining to the problem of perpetuity of human existence since this has been treated by analogy universally and through a more or less familiarity with the phenomena of nature, — a familiarity that, exciting the imagination, is quite likely to bring nature and human nature so into touch that at last it becomes evident that form is but an outward show of which the principle of life is the occasion, a conclusion that the metamorphoses of insects darkly hints at, and whose surprising routine of transformation gave the sages of Egypt their special type of the evolution and development of human life after death.

Digitized by Google

Assuming the habits of the burial beetle as a type, this beetle, digging a shaft in the earth and there depositing her eggs together with necessary nourishment, the Egyptian also digs a shaft at the base of which he buried his dead, food offering not omitted, and carrying out the mimicry into details he substituted for the heart extracted in embalmment an image of the beetle in precious stone, thus suggesting that the dead, if buried, returned to life, the body perishing as does the beetle after depositing its eggs.

The swallow was associated with the departure of the dead, by the Egyptians, and is pictured upon a "solar barge" bearing the immortals to the regions where man's life is renewed, these regions called the Field of Aaru. And it is not a difficult symbol to modern imagery, for the swallow is as little confined to the earth as a spirit, its structure even denying it little foothold, the air its native element as to the hummingbird, that Ariel of swift departures. And the swallow's careering in pursuit of quarry is full of exhilarating dash and emphasis, wheeling like a meteor, now seen and then unseen, to at length vanish in the blue. As

Digitized by Google

is the case with the human spirit, the swallow's incubation is in a nest of clay, this material gathered by the little nest-mates with a dainty regard to soil of feather, all defiling contact prevented by means of high-lifted tail-feathers and balancing wing tip to tip above a rounded back, whose strain of muscle in process of dig of neb occasions a vibrant tremulousness extending to the toes tattooing in the moist mud, — marks of which revealed at flight of the tiny laborers suggest the delicate tracery of a wind-tossed fern upon the sand.

All energy, a pinch of feathers, the merest apology of a body, winged, with eyes alit by an electric glow, how more accurately image the mysterious human entity, the fiery particle of life, a human soul escaping earth to vanish in ether? Here indeed is a concrete image of the soul more satisfactory than that of a parcel of flame, the nucleus of a solar body, which was sometimes used by the Egyptian sages, although without an equally strict analysis, an analysis that constantly points out the unformed state of the soul at period of death, and in which it was necessary to present the idea of growth, of

Digitized by Google

"becoming," to use Goethe's expressive term, this idea repeatedly enforced disclosing that these sages were evolutionists, applying their theory, however, to psychic rather than physiological conditions.

It is noticeable that a large number of the birds chosen to represent the Egyptian drama of the resurrection are walkers, as, for instance, the ostrich, heron, and goose, while the birds of the air are remarkable for dash of movement and ready turn, their avoidance of obstacles so secure and audacious a witness is likely to aver their flight is not around but through them, as the red man claimed was the flight of souls.

The swallow's movements are marked by grace and swing, an andante followed by a scherzo, that marks an epoch in the soul's state prior to and on entrance into the Field of Aaru. But another bird is selected to represent a more advanced state: that bird is the lapwing; and for headlong ecstasy in motion for motion's sake no bird surpasses this inhabitant of the shore, and as to this characteristic may be added a flutelike voice it may well challenge the swallow for supremacy in expression of the bewildering

Digitized by Google

joy attendant on escape from terrestrial captivity. Wheeling, turning on itself — a dash, a sudden somersault and recovery, a drop upon the sands and a race — a pause, and lastly a flash of disappearing wings, this bird presents a magical vision of self-organized motion. Amiable, uncombative, attached to its companions as if bound to them by the "sweet influences of the Pleiades," their movements his, their down fluttering and uprising precisely followed, what better example of mutuality of feeling? Furthermore, what more attractive illustration of a bevy of spirits arisen out of an eclipse of light into full day?

As has been suggested the Egyptian sage, directed by the phenomena of life, did not confine his illustrations to the attractive and gentle of disposition. And this will be appreciated by one who has experienced the rapacity of the hawk in loss of a song bird or witnessed the force of a blow from an ostrich's foot — that bird whose plume was a distinctive symbol of the gods of resurrection, the ever-present gods of light. Seeking to emphasize conditions, to represent state and power of locomotion, swiftness the ulti-

Digitized by Google

matum (for all resurrected spirits are fleet as a sunbeam !), it followed that kindly disposition was seldom weighed.

It is only by inference that the dove is suspected to have been expressive of some feature of the phenomena of the soul's state, this bird seen alone in ritualistic illustrations, but the goose was a sacred bird in Egypt, dedicated to the sun; it was she who laid the golden egg, theme of ancient story, — a story which among the flotsam and jetsam of vagrant myths fared ill since it does not perpetuate the abstruse meaning that it possessed in Egyptian imagery, a meaning that may be discovered through a knowledge of the peculiar traits of the goose, these traits disclosed in its intercourse with man, the goose testifying special regard for its keeper, tenderness even, as in the well known incident of the blind woman who was led about by her pet goose, taken to and from church, and on neighborly visits, and this done with the apparent solicitude of a St. Bernard, — that honest friend of the helpless and unprotected. But while a goose gives evidence to strong attachment for its keeper, at the trumpet call of the wild goose leading a mi-

Digitized by Google

gration, it will forsake its home and be seen no more until the breeding season is past. Obedient to the migratory instinct to a degree that is not found among other domesticated birds and possessing an affectionate nature, it was well suited to its important rôle in Egyptian imagery, that being the emblem of the sun, giver of good to the children of men.[1] The goose, in fact, represented love, and an analogy was found between the sun and the bird even in the latter's obedience to a migratory instinct, for does not the sun journey north in summer moved by a hidden and inexplicable force?

Egyptian bird symbolism either illustrated the resurrection of the human spirit and its successive states, its development out of a nascent condition such as that of the chick in the egg into adolescence and the full-fledged bird, the latter state's appropriate image; or this symbolism is an interpretation of the Absolute, the principle of life. And it is the latter office that the symbol of the goose occupies, for the sacred goose in Egyptian

[1] It is the goose, according to the ancient story, which gives birth to the sun, the "golden egg," at the period of her migration.

Digitized by Google

scripture typifies, as its character indicates, love, — love not alone of offspring, common to bird species, but love of man. This love is not a mere procreative force; it is protective and without possible imputation of self-love as in the case of love of animals for their young. It has the quality ascribable, in fact, to divine love, the principle whence is the good in the universe as also the true and beautiful, bestowed as the sun bestows its light, out of its abundant resources.

There is an attractive sculpture in the Capitoline Museum, Rome, of a little lad in joyous play with a goose, his arms about the bird's neck and the amiable bird apparently responding with a characteristic note to the smiling face it contemplates. The affectionate temper of this bird is further emphasized in Greek art by a representation [1] of Aphrodite borne through the air by a goose, — the relations of the queen of love and her bearer evidently of mutual understanding, a remarkable likeness of expression in their faces, the joyous anticipation shown by a buoyancy in the pose of both figures suggesting a pleasurable encounter with the bracing air.

[1] London, British Museum.

Digitized by Google

It is this movement, so difficult to describe, that is characteristic of all Greek sculpture of animal life, and which is represented in the vigorous and imperious movement which characterizes the horses of the Phidian sculptures, particularly the heads of the chariot horses on the Parthenon frieze,[1] this movement calculated to emphasize the contrasting calm serenity of the gods. A marvel in illustration of the headlong plunging force, the inconsequent rush of the startled animal, this example of the results of study from nature shows the immediate companionship with these high-spirited brothers of men that obtained in those early days when the door of the dwelling permitted ingress to both steed and rider. Furthermore, each representation, that of the painting and the sculpture, is typical of the peculiar delicacy and vividness of imagination which gives that special magic to Greek art.

In the painting, Aphrodite and the goose appear to be a transcript of the Egyptian dedication of this bird to divinity, but this people's grave apotheosis has lost its ponderous weight of sentiment and become a grace-

[1] London, British Museum.

Digitized by Google

ful simile, a *fleur d'eau*, so to speak. The goddess is portrayed in modest raiment, her air of expectancy virginal and not too eager, a very human Aphrodite, and not the august impersonation which would have been the truer rendering of the Egyptian idea. A work of the Periclean age, there is the gayety which loosened the bonds of archaism especially shown in Mycenæan sculptures, a gayety that finally helped to precipitate the decline of that religious feeling which characterized the art productions of this period, — a sympathy with which may be ascribed to Pindar, the Dorian, and who, since of the same period, might well be regarded as an exponent of the attitude in which sculptors of the Phidian school studied nature, the poet in verse with remarkably graphic description presenting real life as did the sculptor through marble.

It is evident that Phidias demanded both lofty sentiment and accuracy of drawing when his theme was natural life, and hence that startling awakening to life in sculptures devoted to representation of animals.

The Parthenon sculptures of animal life, limited to that of the most intelligent species

Digitized by Google

and those typical of a highly wrought nervous temperament, is an example of the Greek's appreciation of the force of expression possible to lower animate life, — and it is noteworthy that at the period when the horses of the Parthenon frieze were produced Micon (475 B. C.) won high distinction by his pictures of the same animal. And here may be mentioned Protogenes, a contemporary of Apelles (350 B. C.), being so far as known Greece's only famous animal painter.

Of Protogenes it is stated that on finding that through the exquisite accuracy of his delineation of a quail in a picture of a reposing satyr holding a flute in his hand, little notice was taken of the subject, all attention being directed to the bird, jealous of his theme the quail was effaced in a moment of wrath. Protogenes was a most painstaking artist, his famous picture, Ialysus and his Dog, was only completed after seven years careful study. The ambition of Protogenes that his representation of the dog should be accurate is evident in the anecdote that, dissatisfied and in a fit of ill temper, he threw a sponge at the picture of the dog's head, which giving the appearance

Digitized by Google

of foam in the mouth of the dog accomplished the effect desired. An incident showing the feeling of an artist in respect to his work, it also shows the Greek's aspiration for perfection in artistic expression. But love of art not only possessed the artist's soul, it appears in the life of the whole people as is testified in the history of this very picture, for when Demetrius besieged the city of Rhodes, where the picture was preserved, in 304 B. C., he respected that part of the city lest the picture be destroyed.

The degree of perfection with which figures of animals was delineated by the prehistoric artists of Greece is shown in a fragment of fresco painting from Tiryns; but here, it should be observed, the work is of mythical purport, and, from evidences satisfactory to the student of Egyptian symbolism, is representative of astrological phenomena: illustrating the energetic on-coming of a bull, the symbolic spots marking the body, together with pose, imply the ascendency of the constellation of Taurus. Showing the extension of Egyptian influence into prehistoric Greece, this painting also shows how the Greek spirit enlarged upon Egyptian imagery.

Digitized by Google

Perhaps one of the most perfect examples of the skill of the Mycenæan artist is shown in the drawing of cattle, an example of which is given in the repoussé work on the famous gold cups found in a beehive tomb at Paphis, Laconia. The subject is a bull-hunt which ends in subjecting the animals. Here is the on-rush of flight; the one method of dealing with a foe, — an application of the horns; a toss, and a stampede; here also is the bull ensnared in a net. On the obverse side there is the untamed but safely secured prisoner, whose temper shows itself in a vicious kick at his keeper; this succeeded by a most amiable pair coquetting together and behind whom stands a ruminating fellow as gentle as a Rosa Bonheur ox. It is in these pictures, frescoes, and repoussé work that is found the Greek of Greek lyrics of the time of Ibykus and Alkman of Sardis, these poets showing appreciation of animate life, — of birds and flowers.

The Greeks evidently had an intelligent appreciation of animals, but this appreciation is not marked by tenderness. Greek art portrays the mettlesome energy of the horse, the bovine force of the irascible bull, and if

Digitized by Google

we may trust to the description of Protogenes's picture, the quivering eagerness, the rashness, and over-heated inconsequence of the dog.

But where is exhibited the amiable tenderness assumed by the Orientals? An exception to this general tenor is only to be found in the sculpture above described, that of the goose and the boy, and this indeed is a parody suggesting humor on the part of the artist, the difficulty of the little four or five years old lad in maintaining himself erect while embracing the ardent goose absurd beyond all description; a sculpture indeed that suggests the gayety of a people among whom awe for the gods had so far decreased that they were fancied to be overcome with irrepressible laughter at limp of aspirant to the queen of love's favor.

But if animals were regarded in some measure as buffoon playfellows and little tenderness was exercised toward them, to judge from these sculptures, there is no mark of cruelty such as is shown, for example, in the Assyrian sculptures representing hunting scenes. It would be impossible, indeed, for the artistic sensitiveness of the Greek — this

Digitized by Google

precluding portrayal of suffering in the drama — to have produced that sculpture of the wounded Lioness found in Asshur-bani-pal's palace, and now in the British Museum. An example of the remarkable skill of the sculptor, it is also a commemoration of agony that appeals to the compassion of the most indifferent, an agony more pitiful than that of Laocoön, for the lioness was sinless, her ferocity exercised but for self-preservation.

The selection of themes in sculpture and painting betrays the individuality of the artist, so also the prevailing sentiment of national art discloses the genius of the people. Place side by side the pictures of animals on the monuments of Egypt and those of Assyria, — for instance that relief of two contentious gods arrayed in masks suggestive of the faces of disputatious cats, their claws like the claws of an eagle, — and how immediate the judgment as to the humor of the people. It is the attitude toward lower animate life that betrays character. And art has recorded this attitude with unequivocal force. In all countries alike, in Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, the sentiment of the people is betrayed by pictures and sculp-

Digitized by Google

tures of these our brothers. In Italy a traditionary symbolism has given Christian art a wide choice of emblems, their pagan source seldom debarring their use. For instance, while the peacock was ascribed to Juno it became a symbol of immortality; the lion, an Egyptian type of power, was ascribed to Christ and by a singular chance to the hermit St. Jerome also, he having relieved a lion by extracting a thorn from its foot. The serpent was used as an emblem of sin, when also a symbol of eternity. The dove, of mythical lore, became a symbol of the Holy Ghost. And in Italian pictures we discover St. Mark, St. John, and St. Luke by their following of the lion, the eagle, and the ox.

St. Gregory is designated by a dove close by his ear. The dog is not forgotten, as is right. St. Roch, the pilgrim monk, is accompanied by a dog, and the Dominican St. Dominick, with a star above his head (is it Sirius?) has a dog for companion. The divine lamb leads the wide following, and it is of interest to note that in Greece the ewe suckling her lamb, as also the gentle cow her calf, together with the lion and two cubs,

Digitized by Google

are the themes of reliefs, the first upon the famous Harpy tomb, mentioned above, the general treatment of the design as of the figures of the three women, — the robes drawn forward revealing the outline of the back and the emblems in their hands, betraying Egyptian influence.[1]

It is in the employment of the ewe, the cow, and the lioness with their offspring that in the symbolism of sacred art is discovered the final appeal of human nature to nature. Apprehending the tenderness of motherhood, at the moment of extremity when the invisible door is opened, — the soul there bidden to pass the threshold, — the one love that never fails in sinless animal life is object of appeal. And how revolting the Assyrian sculpture of the dying lioness when compared with these reliefs and symbolic usages! A warlike people, the ideals of Assyria were those which appertain to military ambition, nor were their ideals greatly unlike those of the Roman at the period of the introduction of Christianity. But when divested of its barbarity, through many centuries Rome

[1] First named on the Harpy tomb (British Museum, London). The last two, Museum in Vienna.

Digitized by Google

held sway against a demoralizing paganism, and it is due to Roman strenuosity of spirit that the decadence in Greece, denounced through the inspirations of the unknown sculptors at Rhodes and Pergamus (and commemorated by Lucretius), did not blight its genius, overrun as Italy was by Hellenic artists after the conquest of Greece.

Infatuated with Greek art, Rome may have been debtor to its principles, but it preserved its racial characteristics to such an extent that it was impossible to obliterate them in the most heedful imitation by artist or poet.

Rome after the introduction of Christianity was a storm-centre of confluent tides which threatened to waste her fertile fields of art and literature, sweeping away the virility of thought represented by the Augustan poets and substituting Byzantine sentiments — these sentiments arising from what may be termed an oriental Hellenism, stagnating to genuine inspiration, clogging the avenues of expression with sediments from an effete civilization, the influence of which is apparent in works of art from the fourth to the ninth centuries of the Christian era, and during which period Italy possessed no indigenous

Digitized by Google

art. But the virility of the Roman race at length asserted itself in art as it had in war, the thirteenth century producing a Dante and a Giotto, revolutionary spirits in the theatre of poetic and artistic expression, neither imitators, but both maintaining an originality that easily made them leaders in a revolt against tradition, a revolt which may be said to have had its centre in Cimabue's studio, where the three ardent advocates, Cimabue, Giotto, and Dante, held high converse on the ideals of art. Giotto's fearlessness of character bore him far beyond Cimabue's more reserved improvements upon Byzantine style of painting, and hence the new school of which he is claimed to be founder, a school that linked the supernatural and natural in scenes of saints and servants, shepherds and sinners, a trait of the pending revolution in art that gave to Giotto's works the stamp of originality distinguishing them from all paintings of his period but also from those of his followers, his high-handed leveling of sacred characters to the common theatre of daily experience being a species of anarchy uncommon to imperial Rome. But it should be re-

Digitized by Google

membered that behind him towered the great Florentine bard whose arraignment of church and state was equally mutinous toward tradition and full of the fire of a democratic republicanism and for which Rome in its prosperous period is responsible. Dante sang of life and nature, and, unrestrained by self-interest, mirrored the problems of his time, his position as a layman making it more possible than for Savonarola to arraign the profligacy of the priesthood.

In the "Divina Commedia," indeed, disclosing the *vivida vis animi* of an Italian genius, it is made manifest how impossible, for example, was the Parthenon to Rome and how likely a St. Peter's, how certain a Michael Angelo and improbable a Praxiteles, or indeed a Phidias, while a Fra Angelico, Perugino, and a Raphael might be anticipated, as at last in the decadence a Salvator Rosa. For Dante was Italy's prophet, a more than Homer, the narrator and laudator of the Hellenes, he was the genius of that epoch that is termed the renaissance, but which in fact was but an epoch of development, — an evolution of an individualism that distinguishes man from man as the human species

Digitized by Google

had been differentiated from the animal; an era when the variation of which the more marked lineaments of the human face is an illustration demanded the rejection of the ideal presented in Greek portraiture, its lineaments being an insufficient index of the spirit within. But this new type demanded interpretation, and through the limitation of expression that interpretation has continued to be dependent on figures of speech, on natural imagery indeed such as was employed in ancient scripture.

And is it not a gratifying discovery to the lover of his kind to find in ancient scripture that when apparently grotesque the imagery used even in those ancient days is exactly adapted to the purpose of selection, that the figure selected could not be superseded by any other object?

Moreover, this evidence of acute analysis is reassuring when considering the problem of human mentality, its rise and development and final direction.

Animal life, including the life of bird and beast, is an exponent of human tendencies, man being serially evolved out of that life vestiges of which often make or mar his

Digitized by Google

career. Intuitively he reads the illuminated book of nature written in a sign-language. And it is its interpretation that gives to the pictured monuments of Egypt their curious interest, for upon these monuments is set down in natural imagery those intuitions which came to man when in immediate association with animal life, these associations finally becoming a basis of figurative expression in which was conveyed those views of life hereafter that have been related above. Views that it may be conjectured were fully explained to the Greek philosopher who journeyed to Africa in quest of knowledge. And the philosophers of Sais and of Athens severally impressed upon monuments of stone, in their scripture and secular literature, ideas that are of momentous value in the history of man, ideas that are a revelation of the scope of intellectual progress at an early date. Whence the absorbing interest in archaic objects wherever found — if buried in the débris of the Nile or in the Acropolis.

And it is of peculiar interest in a study of human nature to find while tracing the impress of representative exponents of the ideals of art an evidence of succession:

Digitized by Google

the priest of Sais precedes the philosopher of the Academy at Athens, Pythagoras visits the Nile and afterward Plato finds his way to Sicily for the purpose of learning the tenets Pythagoras has adopted. Successor to thought set loose from the brain of the Egyptian, and dropped like a seed in the live soil of a Greek mind, Plato builds a temple of philosophy which became the Mecca of a learned world, its environs extending until Neo-Platonism is a watchword of modern thought. And as philosophy, so art and architecture extended their influence, and from Egypt.

The Greek genius, keen, blithe, and penetrating, reproduced the Trabeate form of temple and so adorned that it is an Egyptian idea transfigured. And in art Greek genius electrified the marbles of Paros, dismissing the solemnity of the ideals of Egypt, this liliaceous efflorescence at last moved westward, where its reign was disputed by the rosaceæ of Italian art. But as we have pointed out, the course of art has been onward, its movement like that of the sun in spring northward, the Germanic and Gallic races and the two branches of the Anglo-

Digitized by Google

Saxon under its waxing power developing more comprehensive ideals, ideals that include nature and human nature, — not only "real life," but Absolute Life.

Digitized by Google

VIII

LAW IN THINGS, LOVE AND RESURRECTION

To the opinion that the primitive ceremonial rite indicated a feeling of accountability to a higher power, and hence man should be characterized as a religious animal in contradistinction to other forms of animate life, it is objected that since the rite is mimetic, the object of the mimicry to rob divinity of exclusive control over the economy of nature, there is no more proof of religious sentiment on the part of man than is suggested by the mimetic rôle of a moth seeking self-preservation by assuming the idiosyncrasy of another species. Of the ceremonial rite it may be said, indeed, that while betraying the increasing mentality of man its invention does not eliminate the close likeness between human and animal life; on the contrary, the purpose of the invention being identical, it emphasizes that likeness. The object of the rite was self-

Digitized by Google

preservation, and such is the scheme of the mimicry of the moth; the object identical, each were equally destitute of moral scruple, — determined on robbery, the one of divine rulership, the other of protective conditions not belonging to its species, both man and moth unscrupulously invented means to compass their ends. And furthermore, an invention exercising the imagination possessed by scheming plants, insects, animals, and men, these mimetic performances are examples of an ambition which, destitute of moral sentiment, generated the egoism that led to an exclamation which, accompanying a primitive rite, is typical, that exclamation being:

I am spirit, I walk the sky!

and wherein pride in the proof of his inventive power intoxicating the inventor he claims that he is god!

And this reiterated exclamation, a representative sentiment of the rite of the Red man, is similar to that which was used in Egyptian rites: "I am Ra, I am Osiris." An assumption, however, followed by a declaration: "My food is Ra's food. My food is Osiris's food. *I eat the Truth!*"—which

Digitized by Google

is in effect an explanation of how the author of the exclamation became a god, — that is, became Ra and Osiris, — a statement in which is traceable a sense of accountability, even a moral sentiment indeed, that may be termed religious in the sense of *law-in-things*, since together with this statement is discovered a knowledge of the orderly activity of forces whence is animate life as also the perpetuity of the physical universe.

But if religious, the sentiment is without piety if by that term is meant reverence and self-abnegation, for the exclamation, "My food is Ra's food, I eat Truth," accompanies a rite nominally instituted for the traditionary object, a purpose of control, a desire for perpetuity still giving occasion for an effort to get possession of the forces of life, that possession assumed to bestow a perpetuity of personal existence as endless as the continuity of solar form manifested by the sun, man, otherwise subject to death, becoming through the inventions of this rite "sound and immortal as the sun," — as it is asseverated in the scriptures wherein laudation to Truth is made. And these rites were mimetic, the acknowledgment of accountability

Digitized by Google

— that is, of the necessity to feed on Truth (claimed to be both the food and body of the gods, also), occasioning an accession rather than limitation of the schemes practiced in those more primitive ceremonials such as are found, for example, among the aborigines of America. Whence it is deduced that though evidently an evolution in which is shown increased knowledge of the forces of nature, acknowledgment of an accountability on the part of the Egyptian devotee did not have the effect to reduce his assumption; on the contrary it induced an ambition to procure that power recognized in Truth to the end of becoming as the gods (the gods who were impersonations of those forces of which some knowledge had been acquired). Accumulated experience had brought forth man's reasoning powers as in the case of the Indian prince of ancient Mexico, who remarked: "I perceive that the sun must have a sovereign controlling his movements or he would not confine himself to one path in the heavens."

But Indian rites as Egyptian were believed to contravene the purposes of the ruling god, primeval and semi-civilized man when exer-

Digitized by Google

cising his reason resorting to mimicry, his rites when under either condition exceeding by quality of invention only the remarkable mimetic schemes of lower animals, and moreover directed by the same desire, exhibiting an inordinate self-love of which greed of power is principal characteristic. In ancient lore, indeed, there is preserved stories of heroes whose Promethean greed of power testifies to a common ambition to steal the fires of heaven, that is, to wield the thunderbolt of Jove, the scintillating lightning believed to be the force whence comes vegetal and animal life. These stories based on natural phenomena, and on the belief that man is an integrant part of that phenomena, allied to beast, bird, plant, and the sun, finally appear in myths of the character of the story of Adam and Eve wherein punishment follows this over-vaulting ambition, Hebraic sense of the law in things assuming that a Nemesis lurks in the attractions of nature, her fruits seized by trespassing hand.

But though these myths convey a warning, they seem to have had slight influence in destroying the natural craving of human nature to gain ascendency over the forces

Digitized by Google

whose power is witnessed in nature, and those particularly whereby vegetal life is restored, for if this power were gained continuity of life would be insured. And there are accounts of rites that shadow forth with what earnestness this power was sought among the least civilized peoples, but it is among the Egyptian was developed a complete system of rites assumed to insure the consummation of human desire, these mimetic of natural phenomena as in the case of the more barbaric ceremonials. And these rites embodied ideas of the resurrection of the soul, which, it appears, was believed to be a spark from a creative essence, and of the nature of solar substances, that is to say, a substance that is productive of attributes of which light and heat are the physical indication, these attributes truth and love. This view of the substance of the soul, it would seem, suggested its representation as a nebula or fiery kernel which is destined to develop into a complete organism or world, a star among kindred stars! Great stress is placed on the correspondence between the physical and spiritual planes, and the evolution of a planet was assumed to illustrate the development of the soul.

Digitized by Google

The soul, in fact, to substitute another metaphor, when escaping the body is like a seed discharged from the mother plant; it is but a germ whose future is marked by growth in a new earth. Osiris — who is the representative of the human soul, and hero of a resurrection drama illustrated in Egyptian writing — exclaims with a note of triumph, "*I grow*," as he passes through the devious passages from the tomb to the Field of Aaru, an exclamation that suggests the statement by Plato that man is a plant not of earthly but heavenly growth.

It is evident that the Egyptians deduced from observation of natural life that maternal love in essence is of that creative principle whence is the human soul. This love, therefore, is assumed to be the source of being, all existences, solar, planetary, animate, or inanimate, derived from the outpouring of mother-love. The Egyptian Pantheon denotes this belief, all the gods having their lineage from a goddess whose abode is in the heavens and whose raiment is a garment of suns.

That love is a procreant force was confidently deduced from observation of animal

Digitized by Google

life, and this force was believed to be of the nature of solar rays, these producing vernal growth and ripening vegetal seeds. A procreant energy, it is immanent in all substances whence atomic affinity. It is an energy that gives a potentiality of organization to dust —*that dust into which the human body returns and whence it came. It is a means of resurrection.*

Illustrations of the rites attendant on the annual burial ceremony representing the death of Osiris and his final resurrection disclose the remarkable assumption that it is a magnetic force which restores the dead to life. It is by the application of magnetic passes from the human hand that Osiris is shown to arise and walk. This assumption, however, if remarkable, is in consonance with that ancient notion which would arrogate to man those forces which appear to dominate nature. Magnetism assumed to awaken the dead is but an electric current, and in the hand of man when laid on the dead is like that electric bolt, represented in the hand of Zeus, which awakens vegetal life.

That this electric and magnetic force was

Digitized by Google

believed to be one and the same in hand of man and the sun is evident, since in the series of illustration representing the resurrection of Osiris there are pictures of the sun in the act of irradiating points of light terminating in human hands, these pictures associated with those representing the application of "magnetic passes." And this correlation is of natural inference, since the soul, the animating spark of human life, was believed to be of like element to that which gives actinic power to the sun.

But it is necessary, in order that Egyptian ideas respecting man and his resurrection should not be misunderstood and the priests of the Nile be regarded as in effect materialists, to explain that while determining the nature of the substance of the soul they did not fail to draw conclusions from the fact that the principle and essence of life is Love. Always in all characterization of the soul it is declared that an orderly condition, an adherence to truth, and sympathy for all objects of charity is necessary to its perpetuity. Without love — the vital principle — and without truth — vivifying attribute — the soul falls into ruin, *disintegration* taking place.

Digitized by Google

And it lies in his own power whether man dies or lives: an ultimatum in Egyptian philosophy in which may be perceived an affirmation of man's free-agency as also a witness to the never yielding purpose to gain control over forces that possess a creative and self-sustaining power, — that is, a purpose to become "as the gods."

In appealing to the court of nature, to illustrate the universality of the principle assumed to be the source of life, the Egyptian's argument might have been shipwrecked, since in nature there is the appearance of cruelty rather than love. And it is an indication of his understanding that he specializes the character of the love which is claimed to be the source of life. The vulture is surely wanting in love, except in that mother-love for its young which it bears in common with other birds; true of the vulture, true of the rapacious hawk, a symbol of equal importance in Egyptian imagery.

Nature offers in all animate life examples of entire indifference to pain inflicted, whether in course of appeasing hunger or in gambling with a weaker victim; in fact nature is replete with illustrations of apparent cruelty,

Digitized by Google

a ferocious instinct to destroy showing itself in beast and bird. But it is not obvious that there is an intention to cause suffering on the part of beast or bird. Experience has taught the writer that a child taking up the habit of setting its teeth into the hand of its nurse knew that it produced pain only when shown by a corresponding act inflicted upon itself; and if this is true concerning a child, is it not likely that beast and bird are ignorant of the pain following acts apparently done out of sheer wantonness, and when great suffering ensues? Sympathy demands imagination, a characteristic that appertains to the higher developed mind.

Moreover, is not consciousness of pain dependent on conditions that include an active imagination? The whiplash of pain is not felt by the dullard as by the man of genius, and it may be safely inferred that lower animate life is exempt from that which is termed pain. The dolphin, destitute of a nervous organization, destroys and is destroyed without that agony which is so falsely assumed to be associated with death. He bounds across the heaving breast of the sea, dealing destruction as he leaps, marking his progress

Digitized by Google

with the torn bodies of those idling sunfish which love the light and air; but is there conscious suffering in the wrack? It is quite unlikely. Even as highly organized as is man, when held fast by the prehensile claws of the lion, as happened to Livingstone, all sensitiveness to pain fails, — paralyzed by the extremity of the position.

But if the charge of ferocity in nature is met by a claim of ignorance together with a want of imagination (that projectile force which enables the human heart to feel for another), it remains that often love is wanting, and so, except for maternal love, nature offers slight sign of the divine principle, object of Egyptian belief, a fact that discloses how wise the specialization of the character of the principle to be set forth, — that it is embodied in the passion of the birds, whence comes their self-abnegation, — that it is mother-love pure and simple.

Egypt's nature-studies dictated that motherhood should be apotheosized, be it that of plant, bird, beast, or man. Madonnas of the rose and the lily, of the swallow and the lapwing, of the lion and of man, each are witness to a divine protective love. It is

Digitized by Google

this view that caused the lily of the Nile, emblem of womanhood and symbol of the god of the dawn, to be sculptured upon the closed door of the mausoleum fronting the north whence speed magnetic currents, as also figures of Resurrection Mothers, goddesses of the celestial realms of the dead, to be pictured upon those pupa-like cases wherein repose the last vestige of the departed.

Digitized by Google

IX

MUSIC

THE same powers of invention that primitive man applied in making the bow and arrow, or the stone implement, were exercised in making the first musical instrument, but the purpose of the former differed from the latter in that one was intended to aid in providing the sustenance of life while the other was intended to influence the protectors and givers of life.

And this purpose, by associating the instrument with rites dedicated to these deified sources, gives a peculiar interest to the invention, since it implies processes of thought, including the exercise of imagination in its incipient stages, which are supposed to be peculiar to the human species; and since these rites, moreover, in their earliest form were instituted not only to influence, as has been said, but to control the deific forces that were believed to rule the elements whereby vege-

Digitized by Google

tal life is restored, their vernal reawakening followed by growth and fruitage providing sustenance to the children of men.

Chief of the instruments employed in these rites was the drum, upon which it may well be supposed invention expended its utmost skill to the end of compassing a grand reverberation of tone, the importance of which lie in the fact that this reverberation, intended to imitate the roll of thunder in the vernal shower, was assumed to aid its impetus to activity in the vegetal world, that is to say, in successful mimicry of thunder the power of the god of thunder was insured to the mimic, his drum becoming vehicle to those forces of the conqueror which were exercised in waging battle upon the foes of vegetation.

But there was an adjunct to the roll of thunder in the whir and splash of hail, and the genius of invention was only satisfied when a rattle was fabricated that should mimic this sound, — a sound that was indicative of immediate action upon vernal life. It is difficult to fancy the pride of man in these two inventions, so crude were they, but it is easy to realize the strength of the motive

Digitized by Google

prompting the invention, — a motive underlying all stress of labor in the animate world, that being security to life, the desire for which caused the organization of vernal ceremonials wherein the drum and rattle were a prominent feature.

The organization of a ceremonial included a demand for successive movement, such as was witnessed in the journey of the sun from east to west, the actors in the procession posturing in mimicry of some tutelar god or impersonated elemental force conceived to be influential in vernal productivity. And it was these actors that the sound of the drum was intended to influence as also the elemental warriors, the actors' movements associating them with these warriors; thus instrumentalists and actors became abetters to the dispensation of vernal life, and hence the simultaneousness of beating drum and shaking rattle, together with plant of foot, a oneness of motive inducing concordant action, increasing rapidity of playing on the part of the instrumentalist occasioning rapidity of dancing, for change of time, either fast or slow, had instantaneous effect in change of movement in the dance.

Digitized by Google

And such was the beginning of all musical drama, — noise, clash, and reverberation, and these, though imitative, without beauty of tone. The wild man held as of first importance the motive of his invention, — the motive of his rite, — sound was symbolic, its service like that of color lying in association. In effect the idea was paramount, for this dedicated and consecrated; but that idea primarily excluded fastidiousness, as it was in exercise merely in behalf of the instinct of self-preservation. And it was generated when as an organism man in many ways was inferior to the lower animals. His sight was not equal to the sight of some birds, his hearing was less acute than that of some beasts; but while organically inferior in these respects a cumulative activity of the brain at report of eye and ear suggested means of expression that at length included rhythm and measure producing a harmony in dance and song whence arose musical composition, thus brain power, towards which evolution had been directed from the beginning, — brain power, not eye or ear, gave birth to ceremonials and to music: the latter, the nightingale of arts, indeed, was hatched in

Digitized by Google

the recesses of mental impressions, delivered, it is true, by organs of transmission, but not overruled by them, these impressions being subject to the human will, — a formidable power in the making or marring of ideals, whether in art or music!

The history of music begins with the exercise of inventive power applied in producing instruments of percussion, and at first all musical sound was realistic, designed, like the roll of the primitive drum, to some material end, the sole requirement volume of sound. But at length invention was brought under control of the heart as well as the head, when followed the construction of another instrument, the clash of the rattle nor the roll of the drum desired, — an instrument that does not depend upon the force of the hand, but upon the breath of man, and so laid to the lips whence is speech; and thus emphasizing his tale of love through the direct tones of a flute the Indian lover wooed the dusky maiden of the forest. But not only was the use of this instrument an epoch in the arts of wooing, it was an era in the development of emotional expression. Differing from instruments of percussion, its purpose was

Digitized by Google

less that of demand than appeal, a distinction in character applicable to the head and heart, or the intellect and affections.

And now inventive power is accelerated, the intellect quickened by sensibility to gentler tones, and in course of time various forms of musical instruments are made accessory to rites and ceremonials, these instruments expressive of more exalted sentiment, whence the invention of the church organ and orchestral instruments applied in modern opera, the one class devoted to divine, the other to human love.

But it is here worthy of observation that the modern orchestral instruments, those expressive of human passion, betray the early delight in volume of tone not only, but the clash of cymbal and roll of drum, these being often as dominant as when the rattle and drum were sole instruments of the performance. The drum expresses a martial insistence that seeks control by brute force, hence indeed its invention; and if there is a corresponding meaning, as may be said, in the blare of the trumpet, a tempestuous attack and rout therein signified, the drum for downright obstinacy and beleaguering as-

Digitized by Google

surance exceeds this instrument: around it clings its primeval purpose of invention, and with its reverberations are aroused the instincts that were impulse to imitation of the god of the tempest, lord of war. Satisfying primitive habits of thought, it characterized the attitude of man toward the unseen, which was that of an unwilling subject whose subordination is tentative, the possible escape from which was one of the objects of mimicry.

And this sentiment exists in human nature at the present time, a survival, as the drum, of ambitious desire to control environment. But that singleness of purpose characteristic of human nature in the beginning does not appertain to it now, complex waves of experience developing complexity of mental forces, and, rising to a higher maximum of skill, man has put forth other inventions, as has been said these inventions responsive to enlarged conceptions, new instruments expressing by means of diverse tones the more complex state which experience had induced.

But the invention of new instruments was not at the beginning followed by musical

Digitized by Google

composition other than such as were impromptu and suggested by concordant action in ceremonial rites and primitive fêtes in which the dance was a prominent feature, the application of the new instruments to these fêtes growing out of a sense of tonal power that had been inferred from the sound of thunder at period of vegetal resurrection, the noise and clangor of instruments believed to incite activity. It was this idea that prompted the dire clangor of Chinese instruments on the event of an eclipse, sound believed to be an actual power, — a power that was equally effective in the far regions of the sidereal world as upon man. But in both cases, it is important to remember, volition is the power acted upon, primitive man having learned that tone influences the emotions, those motor powers of action.

Ignorant of the laws by which loudness, pitch, and quality of sound were governed, he perceived their effect; if of the first it is now said that it depends upon the amplitude of vibration, of the second that it varies inversely as the square of the distance from the sounding body, and of the third that it depends upon the rapidity of vibration of the

Digitized by Google

sounding body, both physical and psychical influences of sound were recognized. Unintelligent and without the appliances afterward invented, primitive reason assumed what now is explained in scholastic phraseology. For volition man had no name, but the will was recognized as the motor power of being, — of movement in the stellar world, in the plant kingdom, as in the animal, — activity in these several spheres signifying a power since expressed by the term "volition." And the emotions predicated on the will, being excited by different sounds, were attributed to the effect of those sounds, hence their supposed potency in ceremonial rite, while these emotions being excited by different sounds in a diverse manner were occasion of the invention of dissimilar instruments such as the drum and flute, for example, the one giving amplitude of power to the instrumentalist by its volume, the other an effectual aid to overwhelming sentiment.

At this period of the development of what may be strictly termed human nature there were no sciences; all was intuition and untutored reason. No explanation, indeed, was felt to be needed such as is offered by science

Digitized by Google

as to how sound came to be heard in the ear, though intelligence was sufficiently developed to give rise to analysis in respect to its effect when there and to claim even that while the dead could not see they heard, — its power so expressed.

It has been laid down as one of the canons of music that the instrument must exist before the musician composes for it. The possibilities of the instrument must be tested first, in fact, and its response, its tone, is master of the composition, its quality determining the musical form. The imperiousness of tone comes of the fact that it has an immediate influence upon the emotions, directing their character. For example, a love solo is impossible on a bass drum, a fact that needed no explanation to the Indian lover, the meaning of sound, so far, being self-evident. A loud sound implied mastery, a soft tone pleading ; and this early interpretation, due to directness and simplicity of thought, is ineradicable, for it is universal to animate life and hence it remains the basis of musical expression, loudness and softness representing variation of feeling, and a mastery over these transitions from loud to soft

Digitized by Google

a sign of musical genius, these transitions no longer a result of crude concepts as when used by primitive man.

But if the effect of tone was perceived in the earlier stages of man's development, there is little evidence of sense of an intrinsic beauty in the power that had brought about the effect. It is more evident, on the contrary, that only on account of some utilitarian effect the tone was acquired. Furthermore, discrimination of tone is ascribable to its supposed uses, not to comparative agreeableness; and it may be assumed that distinction alone arose from volume — the loud tone was addressed to unseen forces, the softer tones to a maiden's ear. And this idea was conceived through experience, for it is likely that human speech was modulated after the manner of application of musical instruments. The lover did not express his passion with a warcry, no more than deafen the maiden with a drumbeat, and these rational selections of methods had other ground for their practice than beauty of tones — as amorous proclamations have their inconveniences.

It has been stated above that man is ex-

Digitized by Google

celled by lower animals in sight and hearing, and in the beginning his sense of tone was not equal to that of the birds. But it should be remembered that these our little brothers' vocal acquirements were once in an equally initial state and that they were of comparatively slow development, for the melody of song birds is the result of accumulated imitations; it is the carefully practiced modulation that has given that bravura to the bobolink's song, and the meadowlark's critical rehearsals are suggestive of an acquired fastidiousness of taste. And there are many familiar examples of efforts at mastery of song in New England woods and fields — mockingbirds, so called, declare indeed that desire for more adequate expression held in common by man and lower animals. The catbirds, for instance, who have a low contralto note when responding one to another, are remarkably persistent students of tone, and are becoming, but for some faulty passages, sweet singers. And since the places selected for these efforts are not usually in the open, — except it be toward the dusk when twilight draws a veil over day, — it may be conjectured that the bird is aware of its

Digitized by Google

deficiences (as some human vocalists are not), which, by persistency he hopes to overcome.

It is certainly very clear that he would like attention were he to excel in song, for he haunts the visitor of the wood, making noiseless approaches, pausing at some vantage point behind a leaf or twig where inspection is made whether the visitor be native or not, giving utterance in a decisive cat-call full of a woodland animal's disdain for intruders if that inspection is unfavorable.

Shy birds are more curious than sociable birds, the latter being better acquainted with the inoffensiveness of bird lovers and also accustomed to discriminate between field-glass and gun. For example, robin of the red breast has an aplomb worthy of the master of the quarter-deck as he rears his full front, his gaze fixed on an approaching figure, the very eye of an inspector and authoritative critic, appropriated perhaps from the ibis sacred to Egypt and consecrated to the god of letters, — and whose air indeed might well be assumed by both robin and literary connoisseur (supposing a *crayfish* is in ambush !), though it is manifest robin is the more attractive, for his is the air of the

Digitized by Google

honorable critic, while the crooked beak of the ibis implies an hypercritical attitude, as but to see him in his natural haunts, or pictured on Egypt's monuments, is to acknowledge. And the ibis has no song (which it might be said makes him the better critic), while the robin is all melody, — does he not know it? Plainly! for did he not plant himself at a little distance after inspecting the writer and sing, his bright eyes cognizant of the quiet appreciation. And what rapture there was in his notes, — the flowery field his platform, his dais a stake, and his audience of one but a step away.

Surely singers in the field court attention and are pleased with their own melody: witness the song sparrow singing over and over again his little canticle, an increasing fervor in each repetition. And the attitude taken by a bird determined on rehearsal is a clear evidence of consciousness of the merit of right singing. His feet are planted firmly, bringing into play those muscles which secure fixity of foothold and which are in exercise when the bird sleeps. The perch is horizontal and unobstructed by leafage, — sometimes a bough, other times a bar of field

Digitized by Google

inclosure, — and the little brother pours forth his notes to the final cadenza, his head thrown back and body a-quiver with emotion.

But these are the eminent songsters, advanced in the art of musical expression, hence the sobriquet "song sparrow" characterizing this bird above the many attractive singers of its species. Among birds as among the younger folk — members of the human family — there are favored spirits who declare the possibilities of the race, and it is not unlikely that the English sparrows (Americanized!) may find their voices at last, it being the land of free speech. The activity of this sparrow is suggestive, however, of perpetual motion, and excess of utilitarian enterprise retards the development of the musical art, for leisure is necessary to the finer accomplishments. But who can withhold admiration for these unmusical citizens of island and continent, England and America? What pluck and daring in sleet and snow! Here is man in surtout, slouched hat, boots too weighty for a child's utmost lift, and there is this chit, a brown tuft of feathers, a very knot of sturdy unflinchingness in snow or

Digitized by Google

rain! A street gamin of Victor Hugo's type, urchin of the débris and gutter, the English sparrow shall win at last. Nor need it despair of a voice if the law of evolution has not ceased, for song is hereditary in his race, and to be a bird is much!

The tuneful myriads of warblers vary their notes as if each elfin soul were alive to the meaning of song. The elusive melody of the rose-breasted grosbeak, the deeper notes of the hermit thrush, are suggestive of reminiscence, while the premeditated singing of the practicing bird is yet more suggestive of consideration and a sense of tone, — the one the result of the other in some degree. Even the jubilant bobolink will pause in his rollicking outpour, and recommence, when his finale is ever triumphal and unmatched in brilliancy.

The moods of birds is a continual surprise, for these moods determine the note and it is impossible to limit its character. The swallows twitter, it is said, but when accident had befallen the young of a pair of swallows and one alone was succored, the burst of melody that followed was beyond all description. Vying with the bobolink,

Digitized by Google

and exceeding the skylark, the parent's song was an ecstasy of unmistakable joy, betraying possibilities on the other hand of feeling that might well deter the vandal destruction to which these innocents of God are liable.

It is as pleasant to note the manœuvres of birds as the tactics of plants. To them may be ascribed infinite variety like the Queen of Egypt when wooing and winning Cæsar, while the smaller the bird the more emotional it is, an example of which is signally provided in comparison of the meadowlark and the horned lark, the one equable and calm, the other mercurial, rapid in flight and swift on foot.

My first acquaintance with these birds was eminently calculated to suggest this contrast. It was sunset in the valley of Santa Ynez, when, walking along the foothill near the sea I saw first the meadowlark, alit and singing a low, continuous cantata which my appearance did not interrupt. The bird's attitude was one of confidence and reflection, — and in the field beneath him were a pair of horned larks, their activity emphasized by comparison, for these

Digitized by Google

two birds ran about, climbing now and again the sandy slope whence there was a sharp acclivity meeting the loftier uplift that culminated in the summit of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Though rapid, the movement of the larks suggested a reprieve from the labors of the day, — hunger was appeased and feeding scarcely incidental to the apparent enjoyment of the hour. At each chance meeting in their fleet-footed change of place there was a flutter of wing, the male expressing his happiness by the soft trill peculiar to his species. The delicacy of this note, heard after the many-voiced airs of the day, charmed the ear; in harmony with the influences of twilight, and, associated with the majesty of the adjacent mountains, whose foot is bathed by the crisp waves of the sea, it created in the mind an impression of trustfulness, a security in experience with the sovereign forces of nature, a sense of abiding love which insures safety to the most frail of the forms of life.

The pair was quite alone, an unusual circumstance, and they chattered and trilled as if the earth were but a round nest and the sky a protecting palm overshadowing it.

Digitized by Google

As I continued to observe them, suddenly the male arose in direct line, making a swift straight dart into the sky — thirty, sixty, an hundred feet, even more, measured by the mountains; and, singing as he went a trill more ecstatic and as delicate and individual as the previous notes in the field, the bird tarried above but a moment and then glided downward, alighting beside his little dame, who had continued to busy herself with the accidental trophies, delicacies of the appetite found in the sand, this employment ceasing, however, at return of her mate, and upon which was a flutter of wings, soft notes of joy, and then both arose, disappearing behind the hills.

The softness of the notes of the horned lark and their limitation suggest the elusiveness of the red-breasted grosbeak's song; nevertheless there is a remarkable carrying power to the notes, for they were heard quite to the summit of the ascent, high up in the blue, ceasing only on the descent, which is in silence like the drop of a feather. And the performance seemed to be prompted by a momentary impulse, — a sudden ecstasy, — an ebullition of joy, unpremeditated, the flight immediately forgotten.

Digitized by Google

Difference in the period of the day appears to be marked by birds as by men. It is not usual that birds are heard singing in unison at evening as they are heard in the morning, vesper singing being occasional and erratic, and if in unison it is the united voices of a family group, — a most attractive concert, the accidental attendance on which the writer holds in cherished remembrance, the scene of which experience was also in the valley of Santa Ynez.[1] But the performers of this concert were a family of yellow warblers who were alit upon a mesquite shrub, two on an upper bough and two on a lower, the attitude of each of the three (for one was a female) consistent with a conscious effort to be at concord with the other. In the performance there was a leading note, and this was succeeded by a crescendo of all the voices, trailing off into a diminuendo to again increase in volume, the melody tender and delicate, which, in the stillness of the setting sun, suggested minstrels of the elfin world preparing for fairy rites. And, indeed, in their vesture of gold they augured a blithe company!

[1] Southern California.

Digitized by Google

But aside from an occasional singing in concert, as has been stated, sunset is the hour for solitary piping in the bird world, while the break of day brings an assemblage of songsters filling the air with melody, this auspicious moment heralded by the honest note of the robin, a note heard above all other sounds, be man or dog a-field, for it is a call note, a reveillé rather than a song, it being an announcement of the coming sun.

The matin hymn of birds is marked by crescendo and diminuendo, a scherzo and andante, movements suggested by the varied powers of the performers. And this dawn ceremonial was calculated to attract the attention of the barbaric citizen of the natural world — that mimic man, — and it is not occasion of surprise that the Red man was one of the first to copy the performance, an account of which is given by an officer of the United States Army[1] whose duties had taken him to northern California. Here in a little hamlet, while the guns of his men, undiscovered by the residents, covered the tepees of the awaking inmates, he heard as

[1] Captain Pratt, U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

the sun rose a low murmur, increasing gradually in volume, and finally breaking forth in a distinct acclamation, the performance much like the matins of the birds, there being no distinguishable words. A most impressive incident, — the scene including armed soldiery and those children of nature who yet retained their traditional customs, — typical of the too frequent attitude of the strong toward the weak, it also implies that concordant vocalization was used by wild man after the fashion of wild birds.

But the matin of either man or birds, it may be inferred, was the result of practice. The training of the little warblers witnessed by the writer is a significant example of the sense of sound, as also of the power of unison, while the development of varied fête songs among barbarians declares a discrimination in tonal expression requiring both analysis and practice. And, furthermore, it is important to note that consciousness of effect is equally evident among both men and birds. The bird varies his tone to suit the emergency, and man applied the vowel sound to songs of victory, the breath tones to expression of sorrow, the emission of which

Digitized by Google

was without formulated word, the tone being its own interpretation, as may be seen in songs of the Red men. The dirge of primitive man is but an emphasized sigh, arising from the notion, it is likely, that the departure of the soul is governed by a cessation of the breath, a notion that was origin of a custom among our Indians to respire as the dead passed, this respiration in aid of his soul's escape.[1] Hence perhaps the application of the term "breath feather" to the downy plume of the eagle, claimed to be of the character of the soul's body, mentioned on a preceding page. And, furthermore, the Sanskrit word *saama* (*sa*, speech, *ama*, breathing forth), applied to the Vedic chant, betrays an idea of the nature of this method of expression, — that is, that the chant is prompted from within as the so-called *sigh* from the heart. But whether implied in language or in ancient custom, it is evident that human nature was early governed by ideas of discrimination of tone, which, though broad, were applied rationally, — that is, with natural judgment, and such indeed as is dis-

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, also Publications of Chants, Smithsonian.

Digitized by Google

closed in the vocalization of feeling in universal nature. And it should be noted that tonal acquirement is accelerated by mutuality of feeling as also impassioned love.

Love is at the basis of choral unison; sympathy, of symphony; and it is one of the lessons of nature that birds of prey are songless and solitary.

Harsh sounds are disintegrating and sweet sounds unifying, a fact so well known that when least learned, man exercises vocalization in accordance with it. The bruit of the city is significant of strenuosity in the battle of life; the maternal song at the cradle, of the tenderness underlying that life. The greater the power the sweeter its expression; and only when human energy is exerted as are divine energies, noiselessly or harmoniously, as the stars "sing together," will human life be crowned by delight. Every home a theatre for a symphony in speech as sweet as that of the warblers alit upon the mesquite shrub in Santa Ynez valley; traffic in city streets as noiseless as the growth of trees, or as destitute of harsh sounds as a beehive; clangor subdued, the voices of criers of wares obedient to tonal laws, —

Digitized by Google

then only might man claim himself a harmonious citizen of God's world, this maintained by active forces the most powerful of which are silent.

The history of the musical art is not unlike that of painting and sculpture, for primitive skill was tardy in development of means through which emotions might be expressed, while those emotions were based on crude concepts of nature and the power whence life is derived. As has been said, tone originally had its value inasmuch as it was imitative, but the exigencies of the imitation, together with the mimetic form of the ceremonial, — wherein instruments were employed whose tone gave emphasis to the performance, — developed rhythm, — a certain degree of time and measure being necessary to the purposes of the rite. And this rhythm and measure was obligatory not only to the movements of the dance but to the actor's cries, together with those phrases used in primitive ceremonial which were the initiation of the chant of a higher literary form. And, as has been implied, there were diverse kinds of chants used in these ceremonials in accordance with the object of the perform-

Digitized by Google

ance; the spring fête was of a hilarious nature, but there was the funeral rite, as also other nature rites which were expressive of sorrow or of desire to placate evil powers, the death of man and the death of vegetal life associated with an accidental evil, these occurrences made the occasion of mimetic rites in which the chant was a dirge, the emotions of hilarity ceasing, — the cries no longer joyful, the form of expression that which is used in the recitative of later ceremonies. And these were the first choruses, — the hilarious chant and the joyless dirge, — whence arose the Greek chorus as the modern in the oratorio. But this form of expression was subordinate in the chant of the Greek drama, and in its survival in the oratorio it is as at the beginning a commentary and explanation, a more sustained intonation, a more measured form of sentence; it was accessory to the performance whose theme was thus emphasized.

The primitive chorus, it is evident, was initiatory to modern vocal music, and therefore around it as a nucleus gathered other methods of expression, the strophe and antistrophe of the Greeks, for example; but this, initiatory in its turn, a form which is care-

Digitized by Google

fully trimmed to measure and rhythm and which in case of Æschylus's tragedies has a weirdness of effect that gives greater force to the performance of the actors.

It is claimed that Greece received its limited knowledge of music from Egypt, and it is in Egypt's annual Osirian rites that there was a mimetic performance in which the leader chanted the direful tragedy of death — its inevitableness — the impossible return to past conditions of those who have departed — the morrow being successor of to-day. During the performance of this rite in a chamber of the tomb the gauze-veiled figures of women moved to the rhythmic concord, as dance ephemera at setting of sun, while the voice of the leader of the rite was heard descanting on the divine provisions of Osiris, lord over death. And this the chief of tragedies suggests those weird Hellenic performances, mimetic of the tragedies of life; in the one case all thought is turned upon the issues of death, in the other there is a dramatic presentation of the events of life and their effect upon human destiny.

And while dramas both, there is no orchestral accompaniment, for out of the philoso-

Digitized by Google

phy of neither race had come a demand for such musical expression. Musical composition, indeed, did not exist when the arts flourished among both peoples — the purpose of the one to adorn the monuments dedicated to the divinized dead, and of the other to realize ideals, to actualize emotion, and to adorn life.[1] And it was not until after the Christian era, in 384 A. D., that any serious attempt was made to develop musical expression and place it among the fine arts, and at this period the efforts made were of the most rudimentary character. But, a beginning having been made whereby changes were wrought that did not fail of appreciation in the eighth century, others of greater moment came to pass, these being of such incentive that, in the ninth century, a Flanders monk (St. Hucbald) was inspired to write a treatise upon harmony in which was illustrated the fact that a simultaneous sounding of different tones was a more adequate method of musical expression than that which had been applied. And this treatise was an initiation to those tone combinations which now electrify the world.

[1] It is worthy of note that Plato regretted his inattention to the art of music.

Digitized by Google

The history of melody is an example of as sluggish a sense of the infinite gradations of tone as that of harmony. The Ambrosian chant — which in effect was an ecclesiastical mode of saying and singing divine service — and the Gregorian chant constitute the earlier examples of the introduction of melody into musical composition, these illustrating a development from the third and fourth to the sixth centuries A. D. inclusive. Melody demands the finer susceptibilities of human nature for its inauguration in the arts of expression. This is shown by the general acclamation which volume of tone receives and in the fact that instruments that provided power rather than sweetness were long in the ascendant — those having tones respondent to martial instincts, as the Scotch bagpipe, or that made a loud noise, as the organ at Winchester, which, having four hundred pipes and twenty-six pairs of bellows, required seventy men to operate it! (and this organ was constructed at so late a date as the tenth century) — an ambitious construction proving that invention of instruments was parallel with a poverty of composition long after the introduction of the Gregorian

Digitized by Google

chant into the ceremonial worship of the church.

However, advance, although slow, was accomplished, and new theories by degrees filtering the cruder concepts, the results were eminently suggestive of an advance in the evolution of the young art. Gradually the Italian methods, in which were incorporated the discoveries of both the Flanders monk and Pope Gregory, gained such ascendency that innovations of the elder form were made of equal importance in France during the tenth and so forward to the fifteenth centuries.

And as might be expected by those who have scanned the progress of the building art in Rome (its development of the vault, for example, and finally the rise of French Gothic art), musical composition received a new impulse through a master of the French school. And to M. Deprès is due the introduction of popular melodies into the monotonous chant of the Italian mass, these melodies imbued with a new and startling beauty preparing the way to even greater changes in tone combinations, the new methods of the French school effecting in musical art

Digitized by Google

what was effected by the Greek scholars and artists when, owing to the overthrow of the empire by the Turks, they fled from Constantinople to the banks of the Arno and there instructed the Florentines in the principles of form-making, this done however, without destroying indigenous sentiment.

Folk-song, indeed, wrought out of the elemental emotions of humanity, when introduced into sacred music (giving escape from the monotony of the Ambrosian chant), liberalized conceptions of the uses of music; and, due to the Gallic frank and fearless spirit that partakes in its best phases of the brightness of the Greeks, this change marks an era in the evolution of artistic sentiment. It prepared the way for the Wagner opera, which is a living spectacle of human emotion when conscious of the influence of the forces of destiny, that destiny the combined result of human tendencies and passions.

M. Deprès's innovation drew after it the songs of the Troubadours in France, the Minnesingers of Germany, and their canzonets, roundelays, serenades, and pastorals. For, as happened when landscape art conquered disciples in northern Europe, there

Digitized by Google

was a rapid bourgeoning of compositions, all aiming at new combinations that should enlarge the theatre of musical art. But while France, together with Italy and Flanders, was active in the development of music, Germany evolved ideas respecting the young art which had the effect of bringing it to maturity.

It was Germanic lore that gave impetus to the evolution, for in this lore is discoverable rhythm and measure, as also a poetic strain of feeling that is most adequately expressed through tone.

The genius of the German people, directing the avenues of expression into the channels necessary to the irrigation of the soil whence should spring its musical art, is marked by influences traceable to the early home of the race. In that genius is discoverable the mysticism of the Hindus, veneration for tradition, similar to the Persian, tendency to analysis attributable to the Greeks, together with the martial arrogance of the Romans, these qualities fused and strengthened by slow accretion of clans into a unified nation, and strengthened and fused, never losing a quality which is discoverable in the early home of the Germanic race.

Digitized by Google

It is on the table-lands of India, amid an Arcadian life, were sung the musical Vedic hymns, and it is in these hymns there exists a sentiment distinguishable in the folk-lore of Germany, this bearing ineffaceable signs of elemental human nature, a feeling that is characteristic of the human spirit alone and which is reflected in the mysticism of the Middle Ages, — a blending of child-like trust with an awakening intelligence, perceived in the early periods of civilization in all countries alike and particularly evident in the songs of the people. In India the Vedic hymns are typical of this condition, especially shown in the Dawn Myths, wherein human nature is shown to be a child of nature, its attitude full of trust, the heart of man young and his emotions finding expression through a rhythm and metre that, as the primitive dance, correspond to the pulsations of the heart. And the rhythm in Vedic hymns is present in Celtic lore as also in the sagas of Iceland and Scandinavia. For rhythm is inherent to poetic expression, and it is partially owing to this fact that music is of such commanding place in modern life. Furthermore, it is among those people who have

Digitized by Google

preserved their folk-lore most heedfully, it being from time immemorial a common heritage of the people, that may be found the most advanced musical expression, that expression retaining its early characteristics as in Germany. And from equally profound sources as that of the folk-lore epics of the East arose the minnelieder, Chaucerian in sweetness, suggesting the youthfulness of the heart, which, despite the waxing age of the fused clans, remains a characteristic of the German people. It was from the minnelieder lyric music as lyric verse was born, escaping from inchoate elements as the Cyprian queen from the sea wave.

But it was not the youthfulness of German sentiment which gave expression to musical harmony. Through this achievement in tonal expression German genius declares its likeness to the Hellenic. Prehistoric heirs in common of oriental influences, the German hordes bore away into central Europe intellectual forces that evolved harmony in tonal expression as were developed by the Greeks means of expression through sculpture, prophecies each of the actualization of the ideal; therefore it may be said that

Digitized by Google

neither has surpassed the other in interpretation, both being remarkable for an aspiration to present the ideals thronging the threshold of real life.

Early composers disclose the seriousness that characterizes the Vedic hymn and which is also found in German folk-lore epics, — Bach representing the mysticism of the Middle Ages, outcome of that oriental strain of racial heritage, and Mozart that delicacy of sentiment characterizing the minnelieder. A Prospero among surging elements of a world of tone, Beethoven's musical ideas came upon his generation as an annunciation of the relative place among the fine arts of tonal expression. And as ever with representative genius, Beethoven impersonates the character of his people; dominant in his personality, tasking his brain as a warrior his steed, his ideas pursued into their stalls and set choiring like angels. Demanding intellectual force, harmony predicates rigorous authority, a virile power that distinguishes the works of Michael Angelo from Raphael's, for instance, — a virility which Beethoven possessed above all the musicians of his time and which is only

Digitized by Google

equaled by his successor, Wagner, the heir to German tonal acquisitions.

Intellectual greatness is often marred by a calculating egotism. Of Goethe, whose unhesitating persistency in self-training induced an experimental knowledge of human nature that was lacking in delicacy of feeling, assuming to count the pulse of the hand of love with the cool brain of a scientist, it may be said that he lived to know, "Light, more light," his aspiration; but of Beethoven it may be claimed that he lived to bestow — to give abundantly, the profound emotions of his spirit satisfied only in giving. Beethoven's music is an exponent of the impulses of human nature; it is expressive of ideas without words, ideals without speech, — lilies of those subterranean rivers navigable only by the human spirit, sources whence comes all inspiration, being "the waters of life." In Goethe is represented the self-culture of the age together with its self-seeking trend; but in Beethoven the need of expression subordinated self-consciousness, his art the penates in the house of the intellect, his instrument tone. Goethe possessed himself of an instrument also, but this

Digitized by Google

was the human heart, which he was overfond of dissecting, his diagnosis less that of a humanitarian than that of a scientist.

But, it must be added, Beethoven was equally autocratic, his authority, however, that of a sibyl in the temple, for his enunciations are interpreted only by the initiated. The keenness that is edged by the spoils of experience in Goethe was not wanting in Beethoven, and if the two were yoked, there is little likelihood of inequality in sheer imperialistic egoism. Goethe as a lad desired isolation for the purpose of distinction: "*Wolfgang, wherefore didst not cross the street with thy companions?*" *inquired the mother.*

"*I wished to walk by myself, that people might see that it was Wolfgang von Goethe!*" *replies the son.*

This imperialistic feeling is typical of the German, pervading all conditions, that of "plain people" or of the upper classes, every craft having its king. It gave impulse to that return missive from Beethoven when a visitor's card on which was inscribed Land-Owner was presented to him: *Beethoven, Brain-Owner!* flashed back with the celerity

Digitized by Google

of a scherzo movement. Desire for control over the forces of life that appeared in the first intellectual effort of man is as apparent in the representative genius of Germany as in the primitive ceremonial, for there is the drum-tap of egoism in the concentrated energy of human nature (the first agent to evolution) at the basis whereupon arose musical harmony, Germany's representative art.

Grasp of an idea to its final formulation, laying hold of a concept to its realization in concrete shape, a single word descriptive and radiative with detail, is a conspicuous quality of its literature, and German musical combinations of tone are laden with facets whose multitudinous hues are typical of the varied emotions of the human spirit; revelations in tone, they are like the apparition of a rainbow in a sunbeam.

And it is in this quality of a revealer music becomes imperialistic; a sibyl, it will have no dictation, its influence coercive and impassioned.

Sound is equally dominant over the senses as over the soul; it sets sand grains into symmetry of position, it also thrills the living

Digitized by Google

tissues of the human body with delight or with sadness.

Examples of these effects are common if the character of the music is evolved by events, martial music inspiring martial instincts and funeral dirges invoking tears. And this discrimination of application of special forms of music is an inheritance of man, not derived at the epoch of his evolution, but from nature, nourisher of human nature. Tonal distinctions made by birds are an evidence of a natural discrimination as also of intrinsic meaning in musical sounds — sounds which are dependent on emotion, and which never fail of reaching the understanding of these our little brothers, suggesting that while language often conceals thought, tone reveals it; a suggestion that leads to the important conclusion that tonal revelations are intimately connected with those intuitions which are superior to processes dependent on reason: dependent on the affections, these revelations demand sympathy, and such sympathy as exists in likeness of ideals. Whence, it is inferred, the wide divergence of interest in music and also the diverse character of national expression

Digitized by Google

by means of it. That nature which is alive with tenderness comprehends the meaning of tone in a manner incomprehensible to the less tender and phlegmatic, and the musical composer of one race will express exaltation where another reveals delicacy and refinement and still another dominancy and aspiration, whatever the theme, for the musician, like the artist, is unable to divest himself of racial traits. Therefore a German musician is German, the French is of the Frank spirit, the Pole, of the Polish character, and so on, the unity lying in the genus homo solely, for as happens with the bird species, the singing citizens of the air, there is a general likeness together with a specific difference.

And it is in its composite character, arising from diversities of race, that music declares its place in modern forms of expression. The trend of development is toward the complex from the simple, and this is the manner of musical evolution. From the drum instrumental inventions passed on to the creation of the violin, prince of instruments; from the chant to choral unison; from solo to symphony and all variations which respond to the ideals of the human spirit, so being

Digitized by Google

harmonious with those sympathies which, existing in the substances of the soul, are as susceptible as sand grains in the natural world, and which through strains of melody formulate themselves into expression.

The modern composer of music, slipping from a personal mould of thought into impersonal, marshals and combines his tones as a strategist his military forces, all phases of the combination subordinate to the theme, — an operation that includes the least emotional science by including mathematics, while at the same time it is governed by the most intense emotion. Therefore music seems to be full of paradoxes.

And the composer is often contradictory in the elements of his character. Perhaps there is no art that is more impressible by individuality, and compositions of the highest order, although abstract and impersonal in theme, express the deeper reservations of feeling which are characteristic of the composer, while, if the composer is thus incorporated in his work and the interiors of his soul mirrored, the effect upon his unwary auditor is no less marvelous, for that auditor's personal ideals are pushed to the summit of

Digitized by Google

idolatry, the bewildering combinations of tone robbing him of judgment, precipitating reason to the verge of desperation; moreover, if he be timid he is made valiant, if cold-hearted he becomes a passionate lover, and so penetrating the centres of motives music revolutionizes his conduct.

Such being the effect, tonal forces must be reckoned with as a means of the evolution of the human spirit, and happy is the composer who may inscribe his work "From heart to heart," the benedictory of Beethoven on his *Messe Solennelle*.

Digitized by Google

X

RHYTHM IN LANGUAGE

THE dance of man in the primitive ceremonial rite accords with a rhythm in those pulsations of the heart that harmonize with the upspringing fountains of universal life. A mimic, he wheels with the sun from left to right, leaps as the deer, charges the air with his spear, each step in harmonious movement, and thus an unschooled actor he celebrates the sources of life, his voice accompanying each act in a praise chant, a fragmentary utterance extolling the gods of nature whose dwelling is in all voiceful things, — in glad rivers hastening to the sea; in multitudinous leaves, those living harps of myriad tones; in clouds riven by "the truth speakers," whose intonations are followed by a flash of light; in the small insects, those dainty instrumentalists who, desiring expression, in lieu of voices invented cymbals, violins, and drums by means of struc-

Digitized by Google

tural evolutions, — evolutions that through harmony of proportion increasingly emphasize godliness in the universe of things.

But did this rhythm in the heart, these buoyant pulses that ruled the mimic movement, avail to produce melody in the archaic chant? The voice loud with praise, was its utterances musical? Was the chant tuneful, like the sound of rivulets threading the earth, of the song bird hymning at break of day? On the contrary, the chant is but an expression of fervid ambitions in which melody has no part, ambitions that lead to imitations of the cry of the eagle rather than the fluting of the thrush, an intonation in the voice that is heard in the call of birds of prey and in the roar of beasts of the forests, betraying the untamed ferocity of human nature at that epoch of primitive ceremonials when anthropomorphic worship was established, a worship self-laudatory and pervaded with an overtowering egoism together with pride in an increasing intelligence.

But while the voice of worship lent itself to imitations of the harsh cries of birds and beasts of prey, the rhythmic step and circling movement had a tendency to train into har-

Digitized by Google

mony its tones, for there was an educative influence in the accented charge of the spear, the leap and strike of foot, which, moulding the theme into measure, systematized the wild exclamations, modulating them into harmony, and so establishing that choral unison which at last, as has been said, developed the musical forms which are the great gift to modern civilization.

Human nature is no longer at antagonism with natural phenomena when yielding to its lessons of harmony; and intractable as it showed itself in sentiment, and therefore in voice at the beginning, the mould of circumstance closed about man, and by an inevitable law of development (his period of puberty transitional) from fierce cries he evolved tones that include the melody of birds and the richness of sound arising from the multitudinous voices of nature whose harmonious aggregate is only expressed through the tutored human voice.

For it is in the educated voice that may be heard the tremolo of leaves, the flow of rivers, and the rhythm of the sea, — this being, however, an unconscious imitation which in a discriminate degree obtains in all

Digitized by Google

animate life, and which finally developed accentuation together with modulation in speech among men.

Delight in sound gained as the human spirit developed, and thence the evolution of verse, attention being paid first to expression through the chant particularly, since in worship lies that higher intellectual activity wherein imagination is exercised and whence arose the sacred hymn, the ode to the gods, and finally the epic poem, each gradually trimmed to tuneful measure. And in this measure there is traceable the impulsions expressed by the rhythmic step of the ceremonial dance, those impulsions more delicate and addressed to an increased sensibility to sound, a refinement together with charm of accentuation that finally became the triumph of modern poetic art.

And this increased sensibility to sound, it is well to consider, arose from love of rhythm, a rhythm that is founded in the movements of natural phenomena, — of the sun, whose journey from east to west and return was represented in the order of the ceremonial dance, to which golden orb the lyre was consecrated at last, Apollo assumed to be

Digitized by Google

the author of sweet sounds, all nature's choiring awaiting his appearance at dawn.

It was a sense of rhythm that gave to the myth and legend recited at the hearth-fire in the primeval tent its curious rise and fall, whence finally developed the office of the bard who chanted the same tales to the resounding strings of the harp, while to him was attributed an authority scarcely excelled by the actors in the sacred rites, for was he not the oracle of things felt but unseen? Were not his tales concerning a ghostly world conceived to be inimical to an unconsecrated bearer of news thereof, so showing that he alone had immediate converse with the gods? A seer, he prophesied; a singer, he dispelled gloom; a messenger from the Unseen Ones, the fold of the chieftain's tent was lifted at his approach; he had entrance into the courts of kings; to his voice the multitude listened as to the voice of a god.

But the human voice is a perishable instrument. The tales dependent upon the bard's brief life departed with his breath, and means were therefore invented to retain these tales, — means that addressed themselves principally to the eye, and whence were developed

Digitized by Google

those later inventions that make possible intercommunion without aid of oral speech. But the primary method of writing was mimetic, that is, all ideas were represented by imitations and pictography assumed the office of history, the rude pageant of rites and ceremonials being delineated, the chant, even, suggested through picture of instrument, attitude of dancers, gesture of tutelar deity, and a sign of interlude, — a most ingenious tableau, as also a remarkable invention, — an invention betraying the persistency of expression which governs mind, together with its aspirations for the perpetuation of its most prized ideas. And it is worthy of note that the evolution of this invention was accompanied by the same assumptions as those held in the primitive rite. Imitations of objects by way of delineation were claimed to gain control of those objects, as imitation of the forces of nature gave control to the imitator, and thus each pictograph was an agent of unseen power, — as, for example, a pictograph representing a beetle in Egyptian sacred text was claimed to possess that indestructible force believed to animate the original, whose metamorphosis is nature's

Digitized by Google

testimony to the inevitableness of form where life exists, testimony also to the continuity of both form and life. A pictograph, in fact, when consecrated to sacred usage was claimed to be a vehicle of psychic force supposed to dwell in the universe in its least as its greatest part, wherefore it was a magnet, as has been said, whose duplication formed a psychic battery, so to speak, which, applied to the purpose, revivified the dead, — as, for example, the electric storm was believed to revivify vegetal life, an idea on which the sages of Egypt not only based their demonstration of the immanence of the principle of life, but an idea whence obtained the sanctity of all writing and even of its author, on whom a restraint was laid to the extent of the forfeiture of life did he not record the "truth." And primitive as these notions, — assumed through a belief that there is potency in form to compel the induction of life, — they did not vanish in the advance of knowledge, whence the formulas of sacred text inscribed on mausoleums of the dead, these formulas claimed to be imbued with power to protect the inmates from the second death (death of the *soul-seed*, the *nebula*, core of being).

Digitized by Google

And hence the custom of pronouncing an anathema as also a blessing in a sacred text, the letter of the text even assumed to have a blighting or a saving influence, — a notion which is difficult to condemn since the content of a word is thought, and its "spirit maketh alive, while the letter killeth," a statement that illustrates the penetrative genius of the author's mind. It is St. Paul who declares that duality of being taught by the Egyptian sages, affirming that man possesses two bodies, the one terrestrial the other celestial.

Prior to the apostle's era, however, Moses, erstwhile pupil of the priests of Egypt and experiencing how readily ideality falls into idolatry, on escaping the country of his nurture, demanded of his people a suppression of objective worship, a figuration of things unseen through imagery therefore forbidden, the Hebrew lawgiver thus showing a knowledge of the pitfall of literalism, — a literalism that would exalt even the sacred scripture into a fetich.

This wisdom in matters of far-reaching importance is a significant illustration of the understanding of the Hebrew apostles and

Digitized by Google

leaders. And it is in Hebraic literature where is first emphasized a sense of the effect of poetic expression, there being a peculiar rhythmic trend in this ancient scripture. Of Solomon's Song, an apotheosis of nature, it may be said that there is a lyric note which contrasts with the ancient chant in voicing the joyousness in nature. In the Psalms the flow of feeling is of a deeper current, and more majestic while at the same time as rhythmic, — for did not David dance to the stroke of the resounding harp as he sang?

Sound was unwillingly yielded to the silent letter, and the ancient author sought means to make vocal the written word, accent and shrewd points inviting thought to implied tone. It is of curious interest to note the complicated means resorted to by the Chinese in order to demonstrate intonation. The Chinese language, indeed, is a complex invention, its structure puzzling the student as the structure of tropical flora. But that necessity for entire expression laid upon the human heart has introduced rhythm into all forms of writing, that of the Chinese, the Egyptian, and the Hebrew,

Digitized by Google

also of the Hindu, where the use of rhythm is most suggestive as in the songs of the Rik, these songs possessing the sentiment and genius of the people, and where is that common appeal to nature that is like the spontaneous outburst of caroling birds, or the tuneful flow of multitudinous rivers, characteristics found in those unparalleled epics, Mahâbhârata and the Râmâyana, these including songs, ballads, histories, nursery tales, philosophical and religious treatises, and even genealogies, all in metrical verse. Covering centuries of development, these Hindu verses are an assurance of the trend of thought toward musical utterance, a recognition of power in tone which augured the birth of the musical art as well as declaring the perpetuity of poetry.

Poetic measure is visible harmony, and in all inspired words there is a tonal effect, the letters themselves a keyboard to imagination, while points of accent are a substitute to the interpretive measure, being in the highest forms of prose like a musical annotation.

In brief, it was by points of accent, by measure, by tonal letters, that the human spirit, cognizant of the antagonism raised by inhar-

Digitized by Google

monious sound, sought harmony of expression.

The ceremonial chant of primitive man is the first product of the human intellect applied to expression by means of language in which imagination begins to assert its control. And this form of expression at an early epoch was marshaled into measure, exclamations and interludes succeeding each other resulting in a rhythm which at a later period became one of the principal elements of poetical composition, an element that dictated the terse elegance of the Hebraic Psalms, the perspicuity of Homeric verse, and the melodious measure of the "Divina Commedia." For rhythm, increasing their import, limits the overflow of words, so giving depth of meaning to language as is increased the depth of a stream by rigorous boundaries. And as the primitive chant and hymn addressed to divine personalities (those psychic forces governing natural phenomena) were intended for all, the appeal to all, they were vocal with common emotion. As the chant so the folk-lore recited in the seclusion of habitations less admirable than the dwellings of beasts. Voicing sentiments at an age

Digitized by Google

when the ideal and real were indistinguishable, actual and imaginary events equally true, this curious lore is testimony of the trend of an evolution which, beginning in the lower animate world, continues in human nature, that trend an increasing manifestation of psychic power which in man is marked by an effort at its interpretation. For folk-lore is an exponent of that epoch when intelligence grappled with its environment to the end of wresting explanation of human conditions and limitations, that intelligence immature and credulous. And it is this lore which is basis of the epic, its crudities shorn away by the pruning hand of those representative men who have successively risen in the advance of tardy civilization, their appearance prophetic of the possibilities of the race and of human nature. The poems of Homer, for instance, are an accretion of folk-lore set to noble verse, his Iliad a mirror of human nature at the point of escape from more primitive state, a state representatively shown by Hebraic tales of bloodshed as in the wars of Jah, and in which pride of precedence covers itself with a mantle of loyalty to a tutelar deity, a sentiment distin-

Digitized by Google

guishing the early Hebraic race from the Hellenic in its fierceness of animosity toward the deity of an enemy, denunciation and obloquy being heaped upon the god of the foe. And this arrogance was a heritage whence arose the tragedy of the world, the crucifixion of Christ. Intolerance of opinion does not characterize Hellenic literature as Hebraic, and in Homer there is a comprehensive grasp of the universal, a sense of the oneness of human nature, that gives a perennial interest to his works. And while he represents the savagery of man by an Achilles sulking with chagrin in his tent, or roused like a wounded lion, which without distinction destroys all in its path, Homer discloses through Hector the gentler passions of men. Pausing on the way to tales of human slaughter, he rehearses a scene of human tenderness; shows as in a vista the sweetness of love contrasting later with the ferocity of hate. This scene, the parting of Hector from Andromache and Astyanax, is an episode impossible to the life of unawakened sensibilities: betraying the sources of civilization, it gives a lasting grace to a poem whose themes are too often representative of the uncurbed

Digitized by Google

and bestial instinct of war, scenes of which are portrayed with an evident delight in the theme. And it is when the human spirit is undeveloped and in control of ferocious passions that it finds pleasure in reënacting in imagination deeds whose sole excuse is that sudden impulse to ferocity as unpremeditated by man as by the lower animals.

Representative of the sentiments of his age, Homer's poems betray the trend of human nature when uninfluenced by lofty ideals. Records of war are a reminder of that early instinct that prompted the invention of the tomahawk, and the subsequent invention of the flute is often forgotten, the one an implement of bloodshed, the other an instrument voicing love. It is the flute that augured the advent of civilization, representing the tie that builds the home, the bulwark of the nation. Its thrushlike strains were the evidence of an evolution that should give birth to lyric verse, that form of expression that is the song element in folk-lore, and which gave a soft, rhythmical flow to the voice of the wild mother crooning to her infant in its osier cradle swung to a leafy bough — an element heard

Digitized by Google

in the murmur of woodland wooing and which pervades the verse of Robert Burns's love songs.

The lyric is founded on elemental emotions whose spontaneity marks their likeness to the emotions of animate life, emotions that have their source in love, the principle of life. Lyric must be the choiring voices of souls, and it is a veritable vision that imagines the songs of seraphs attuned to the lyre, for the glad pulses of human nature are in sympathy with the lighter measure, whence the elastic foot of troops of dancing Vestals in days of eld. Bidden by joyous impulses, the rapid foot followed by inweaving arms, the wheel and turn obedient as stars in their orbit, a living constellation, the Vestal dance was a visible melody prefiguring the lyric metre as the epic is reverberant of the more primitive dance.

The effect of lyric verse is shown by contrast, and particularly in the drama where there is harmonic measure, a cadence following the defiling lines like the step of marshaling men ; for here if suddenly a change is made, and the theme breaks into lyric verse, the pulse of the reader quickens his

Digitized by Google

imagination on wing with the writer. A method used by all dramatists, the introduction of the lyric into blank verse is especially noteworthy in the works of the two great dramatic poets of English literature, Shakespeare and Browning. Shakespeare's attitude toward human nature is like that of a musician with his score, for his ear, open to the affinities that are the keyboard of human destiny, hears the tumultuous throes of passion, despair, and hope. But, unlike the Hellenic dramatists, Shakespeare gave witness to lighter and more joyous side of life. Note the exuberant joyousness of Ariel. Representing the unrebukable instinct for play in all natural life, the delight of ephemera in the dance at setting sun, the clumsy frolic of the bear's cub, the inconsequent tumblings of the lion's whelp, Shakespeare's Ariel is a symbol of all jocund nature restive under the yoke of labor, suggesting her cheery flocks in air and field at blossoming tide of the year. It is a sprite only to be conjured up in opulent youth, and by the poet of Avon, with the optimistic heart of a boy. Shakespeare did not set about admiring nature patronizingly; on the contrary, he shows an

Digitized by Google

affinity to all natural phenomena, whence the unstudied outbreak of Ariel's song: —

> "Where the bee sucks there suck I;
> In a cowslip's bell I lie:"

the lilting lightness of which is like a swallow's dash and swing.

This freshness is characteristic of Shelley's "Skylark," and could only come from a heart which, susceptible to the wordless melodies of nature, had never been estranged from their influence.

It was the habit of primeval man to ascribe similar passions to the clouds, to the wind, and to the bird, as those governing himself, and later a liberal pantheism prevails in all poetic interpretation of nature. Indeed, pantheism is fundamental to human expression through art or language. And true of pantheism, true also of polytheism, since impersonation is necessary to presentation of the higher visions of the poet. The prophet is he who impersonates his dream, and it is a traditional adherence to the methods of the seer whereby Shakespeare won place. A liberality of judgment and a comprehensive grasp of the springs of human nature, together with a rare and delicate understand-

Digitized by Google

ing that " He maketh all hearts alike," even the " heart of the weed " being akin to the heart of man, is shown in Shakespeare's early poems. And, his boyhood passed in Ariel-like freedom from intellectual restraint, the poet matured without loss of that breadth of sympathy which the overbending skies and intimacy with nature breeds in human nature when in its native integrity. This is apparent in the free swing of his rhythm, the unconscious lilt in his songs, the steady movement in his sonnets. Impossible to a poet nurtured among beetling roofs and smoke-stained skies, this freedom in form of expression characterizes the poet of nature. But Shakespeare was more : he was the poet of human nature, a lover of his kind, and therefore he might not remain a sonnet-maker only, nor trim his fancies to the lyre, — it was the necessity of his genius that he should become a dramatist.

The primitive rite was the first drama, and as in Egypt a drama of the gods of life. Moreover, it is in the contrast between the later and early mimicry, the incipient and the matured drama, that is perceived the great sweep of the evolution of human intelligence.

Digitized by Google

From the invention of the one indeed, to the evolution of the other the arc is wide!

In the beginning all interest was concentrated on perpetuity of life here or hereafter, the instincts of lower animate life in active exercise, but in the development of mentality these instincts became less the motifs of invention. Men began to look into each other's faces and to read their records. Less self-involved, they developed new sentiments and ideas, these in effect burning away the sheaths of outward show and disclosing the kernel of truth lying within. And it is impossible not to give profound thought the dignity of measured sentences, for the ideals of the human spirit come by way of rhythmic utterance, while it is equally impossible to imagine great moral truth delivered in a harsh and discordant voice. So general is the idea of a sweet voice as an accompaniment to words of wisdom, a harsh enunciation shocks the ear. Does not imagination give to the Christ a voice full and sweet?

Who has not longed to hear the Beatitudes (in which every sentence is a milestone for the developing soul) as they were spoken by the Master?

Digitized by Google

The best specimen of human speech has a cadence closely allied to poetry, and the best examples of prose are easily versified, while oratory is most effective when it rises into metrical intonations. Furthermore, rhythm is an aid to memory, for doubtless the tenacity with which myths and legends have held sway through centuries of unwritten record came through its magical powers to limn scenes and sentiment upon the tablets of memory. And to this power is due the stable hold that folk-lore has maintained in the annals of music as in literature, proving that rhythm may be claimed to be no less a part of human nature's equipment to insure expression than is the power of song to birds. Whence it happens that ideas, if fledgelings of an early brood, must needs pipe and flute to cadence as insects in the sedges, and later, when imagination holds a more comprehensive sway, sentiments that are the concentrated expression of human experience find in poetry and song the most adequate means of address to the hearts of men.

But as the images of the mind became complex difficulties arose that had not occurred in the singleness of purpose and simplicity of

Digitized by Google

apprehension when the chant, hymn, and epic arose, and blank verse, or even the lyric, not sufficing for that marriage of tone and thought which is derived from those increased sensibilities that gave birth to music, the multifarious forms of verse now in usage were introduced. An amplification of means whereby the poet discovers the human soul to the world, with all its kaleidoscopic variation of feeling, these forms came to be an illustration of greater or less versatility, just as the varied cadenza of a song bird declares his surpassing proficiency in the art in which his species is not the sole competitor.

Mention has been made of Shakespeare's habit of breaking through the customary plainness of his verse with a carol, but Shakespeare did not amplify his form of verse, — he adhered most confidently to stately blank verse; for he was and ever remained master of this form. Even in use of the sonnet it appears that his genius reserved itself for the greater freedom found in less arbitrary measures. This is not true, however, of Browning, whose flow of measure breaks up into a cataract of changeful rhythm that is reverberant of novel thought.

Digitized by Google

Unlike Shelley, Browning is seldom enmeshed in metre, attracted by euphony for its own sake. Browning, indeed, resembles none other than himself, and his verse, often overladen with meaning to the exclusion of proportion and melody, must be judged apart from poetry whose form of metre gives grace to a sentiment lacking in weight. But while no trimmer, he could finish his verse to a nicety when desirous to do so, and if, caught and carried forward by his rhymes, he may be accused of redundancy, Browning seldom expressed himself unworthily, for it is evident that he realized his high commission as a bard.

Browning increased breadth of expression by his ingenious application of earlier methods of versification, assuming early and late forms with equal facility, and it is in his voluminous verse that may be seen the continuity of methods of expression, once invented, while, as in this illustrious example, there is an evidence that a form of verse at any time invented is certain to live. The chant still remains, and as an adjunct to ceremonial worship; the hymn is still the means of address to divinity; and the epic retains

Digitized by Google

its place, notwithstanding the development of those new forms, the ode, the lyric, and the sonnet.

It is in the continuity of methods of expression as shown by retention of all forms of verse used by tutored and untutored man that is betrayed the complex quality of human nature in its more advanced stage of development. Moreover, in the amplification of means of expression is shown the tendency of the human mind to growth, this in effect indorsing the theory that not only is the soul like a plant, but that its growth is not limited to the present life, its full expansion in a less limited sphere.

And gauged by the evolution from the primitive intelligence evinced by the sentiments of the ceremonial rites and that intelligence that demands for expression not alone the chant, but the hymn, the epic, the ode, the lyric, and the sonnet, with all other minor amplifications of metre, the development of immortals may only be represented as in Egyptian scripture, by the evolution of suns in the sidereal heavens, for conception fails of its understanding except by an approximate image such as is offered by natural

Digitized by Google

phenomena. In natural phenomena there is a mirror of the human soul, human nature being in truth the summary of the visible universe, wherefore in plant, animal, and the stars it finds itself reflected. It is the evolution of these diverse forms that is the prophecy which was read by the forward genius of various races heirs apparent to the growing mentality of humanity, these stalwart minds representative of the possibilities of intellectual growth here as hereafter. For of the human race it may be expected that its average will rise to the level of the representative and highest single example, educative influences unchecked.

Digitized by Google

XI

LITERATURE, LINGUISTS, AND POETS

As has been said, the history of literature begins at the epoch of primitive ceremonials, hence its earliest record is a delineation of the ceremonial by an assemblage of pictographs, for here is given an interpretation of the sentiments of the chant through pictures that are images of ideas. This imagery was transformed into signs and so finally incorporated in a written language. Thus in the very tap-root of words nature is revealed as the governing force of linguistic expression, for the pictograph was a delineation of some natural object conceived to express through its characteristic traits an idea, that idea when spoken embodied in a word.

And language so derived became poetic. Moreover, in as far as poetry is orderly in its structure and admirable in its presentation of truth it is the natural expression of human nature. It has been related how man

Digitized by Google

chanted his thoughts, sang his adorations in hymns, and rehearsed his experiences in those folk-songs in which fancy clothed expression by means of natural imagery; but the first speech of man testifies to that imagination, evoked by nature's object lessons, that distinguishes him from lower animals, — an imagination which at length generated noble sympathies, providing a trustworthy perception of the true, beautiful, and good. To natural objects, to the visible embodiment of God, the children of men owe their training in expression, environment dictating its form. It was environment that gave strenuous force to the Latin language, copiousness to the Hellenic tongue, and tropical redundancy to the Oriental; while among tribal races as in the Americas, North and South, the influence of environment is obvious, for in these dialects there is evidence of emotions called up by objects admirable or otherwise, this shown even in the intonations required in pronunciation of names given those objects.

Influencing speech, locality effected that racial divergency of expression which is found in literature and art, whence the homogeneity of folk-songs among Germanic

Digitized by Google

peoples, these songs having one cradle, whence also the difficulties of the translator, the surprised acclamation when appears a genius so comprehensive as to capture the *ignes fatui* in foreign idiosyncrasy of expression testifying to those difficulties.

Specialization of form of expression is opposed to universalism, and literature, being subject to immediate environment, is a less comprehensive medium of expression of the ideal than music, for similar tones are everywhere the expression of similar emotions, — a fact that determines the qualification of music to be an interpreter of human nature in its most elusive recesses, an interpreter that shall be a revelation of the absolute principle governing life.

A people's literature bearing the impress of its origin provides both thought and methods of expression which the linguist seeks to interpret, and it is the able linguist who promotes reciprocity of national sentiment, even though that sentiment is deeply imbedded in national life, so partaking of its special genius. But that linguist who confers this benefit is born such, his service intuitional and unteachable; of him it

Digitized by Google

may not be said that he is sunk in a bog of literalism, a disaster common to the philologist but not to the poet.

The poet is brother to the musician, both being tone-masters and each endowed with the so-called sixth sense that overleaps the boundaries of circumstance entering the arcanum of thought, and it is of interest to note the influence which the sphere of their development has upon the character of diverse literary products.

Is it possible to conceive a Homeric poem where the engirdling sea and towering mountain is not found? Dante is eloquent of vast heights and impenetrable glooms experienced among the Alps. French literature is the essence of varied plain, stream, mountain, and sea, concrete and pervasive, alchemized in the nurtured French spirit and there mirrored. Molière, De Lisle, Sully, Prudhomme, and the rest, together with those innumerable lyrists whose verse was first heard in the south in the carols of the troubadours, declare the influence of varied scenery.

Germany's literature where most indigenous gives evidence of inclosure, its expres-

Digitized by Google

sion concrete, excessive idealism thrusting itself upward, craving breadth, and finding it where there is always room! Intolerant of insularity, England compassed the world in a Shakespeare. And it is the voice of the poet which is heard in the literatures of these countries, characterizing them, for he is interpreter of the spirit of the people. Does not the stirring of profound national emotion demand a national hymn?

The ideal in literature, as in painting and sculpture, is content only with harmony.

The human spirit moulds its outward shape, discarding disproportion and ugliness; its final expression is harmonious, for truth demands a rhythmic embodiment, as loveliness of soul, beauty of voice; therefore in obedience to a similar law in all countries where literature is developed a bard is born whose rhythmic annunciations pulsate with the heart of his people, the national sentiment gauged by the poet.

One of the evidences of advanced culture is a sweet voice, and the peoples of the world's oldest civilization are remarkable for gentle modulations in speech which the younger races find difficult to imitate. It

Digitized by Google

is evident that as these elder nations preserved their lore in form of verse, tone was cultivated by way of recitation, this influence, combined with constant association with nature, preventing the development of harsh voices, such as are not uncommon among the Anglo-Saxon, the builder of those great cities and their accompanying railways whose bruit excites activity, destroying meditation, — an activity that in the United States, were it not for its noise, might well be likened to that of an ant-hill. But notwithstanding the tumult of a new world in the process of building, even in its crude beginning here and there an undercurrent of calm persistent seriousness has given evidence of hidden springs where the souls of men were seeking to slake their thirst for truth.

This is evident in the verse of the eldest of our poets, William Cullen Bryant, though it must be added that his rhyme has a suggestion of transportation — something of the elegance of Macaulay, whose writings are characterized by less spontaneity than polish, for emotion in Bryant's verse does not control the form. Mould and chisel it, as

Digitized by Google

Michael Angelo's chisel mastered even the insensate marble, the form, on the contrary, shapes the emotion — an abnormal condition, for emotion predicated upon the will (which is fundamental to all formulation) should compel poetic measure to respond to its need.

Restraint is evident even in Bryant's most inspired poems. In "Robert of Lincoln," "The Fringed Gentian," and "Death of the Flowers," where are attractive grace and delicacy of perception together with a Wordsworthian charm of phraseology, there is little evidence of warmth of feeling; the glow is not of summer, but of early spring. The writer does not seem to be intoxicated with the beauty he describes. Bryant's poem, "To a Waterfowl," while showing a sense of the suggestiveness of winged aquatic life, is incomparably inferior to Shelley's "Skylark," for in this poem Shelley's rhythm is the rhythm of palpitating bird life, his measure, obedient to the lark's melody outpouring at the gate of day, an inspiration from nature as veritably on the part of the poet as the bird.

The inconsequent mind of Shelley was nearer the forces intuitional in animate life

Digitized by Google

than the many poets who, like Bryant, were deeply susceptible to what the broad skies and forest shades contain, and therefore the spontaneity of his verse.

It may be predicated that when a poet willingly becomes a translator of another poet's verse his genius is not an overpowering force, individual and autocratic, and when Bryant gave to the world his Iliad and Odyssey, he declared his minority among the world's poets. Great as was his gift to the world, and as lofty the seat among the learned which was thereby gained, this admirable translation assigned to our eminent American poet the place of an interpreter of another's thought rather than an interpreter of universal truth — and true of Bryant, equally true of Longfellow, translator of the "Divina Commedia." Greatness of intellect, forcibleness of emotion, are not compatible with the labors of a translator; and when these two poets laid their shields at the feet of the masters of Hellenic and Italian epic verse they declared what is evident in their poetry, — a sympathy for a poet's mission, a sense of song, but also that not of such poets are made "liberating gods," theirs not

Digitized by Google

the illuminating torch of the bard. Facility of expression is common to each as the dignity of sincerity of feeling, but they had not the fecund genius of the lyrist, they might not grasp the wand borne from afar by the minnesingers as did Shelley. The minnesinger could neither read nor write, but these poets, Bryant and Longfellow, were scholarly men who sang as Patti sings, not as the bobolink or the Virginian red-bird. Human nature ran riot in the troubadour chanson, and the Provençal roundelay had a charm derived from the clime of southern France, immediate environment enforcing itself upon the verse, though, it must be added, the habit of song was primarily derived from customs habitual to the race when roaming the plains of Asia, where all literature was poetry. But environment, accidental, as it were, is not impressed upon the early American poet's verse, for it might have been written in England with slight change of phraseology. True of Bryant's verse, true of Longfellow's. In Longfellow's "Hiawatha" there is the rare sympathy that is found in imaginative minds, as also a sense of the musical grace in measure that is as

Digitized by Google

frequently an endowment of the master of diction in prose writing as that of the poet; but the poem is without dramatic power, and that, too, where ample subject is provided. It is evident that the poet had known the Indian race through the vista of others' experiences only; and although a poem is conceivable that is full of the strenuous vitality of an unenslavable race, terse, and rugged with episode of battle and amour, "Hiawatha" is not such with all its attractiveness and grace. Of gentle humor is Longfellow, well housed and well born, his muse too highly bred for those American wilds which needs must be fertile of native genius; an English rose transplanted, British currents of thought swept away immediate influences, the brain of this scion of English stock, as that of Bryant, bearing impress of Old England. And of most of the early brood of songsters that New England hatched this may be said.

Whittier, however, in choice of subject often gives currency to the feeling that he had the impress of the New World upon his sheath of song. His "Snow-Bound," in metaphor, in description, and selection of metre, has a flavor of new, rather than old

Digitized by Google

English life. The skill of movement in presentation of theme is derived from something personal in the nature of this poet that suggests spontaneity, his verse, unartificial, giving a sense of the simplicity of the elder bards, and as with them most characteristic when the theme is the most personal.

Enlisting all hearts by a poet's intense advocacy of freedom applied in no narrow boundaries of caste or color, it appeared as his genius ripened that Whittier's was a fitting voice for the spirit of our New World ethics, the key, sympathy with human nature, unlocking his treasury of rhyme, his interpretation of nature less vivid. And when his theme was actuated by a sense of wrong his verse became molten; like quicksilver, it ran white and glowing.

In his "Barbara Frietchie" the placid Quaker is a dramatist, betraying that if he loved the sequestered life of nature his soul caught fire at human exigency, a response to which lifted his voice above the platitudes that, if they must be uttered, are better given in prose. The inspiration of these themes, subjects suited to the generous impulses of his nature, drew him away from

Digitized by Google

the scholarly groves of song wherein Bryant tuned his lyre. It is suggestive of his individuality that although human need or wrong inspired his song as these themes had touched the tender heart of Shelley, they gave a clarion note to his verse, while their effect enfeebled that of the English poet. Shelley's mental habitudes of mind were those of the pantheist, and Whittier's of the Christian, narrow perhaps, but direct and passionate. Distinctly ethical, he is therefore representative of that people who had exiled themselves to establish a theocracy, — a republic of opinion, — this, if need be, maintained by the sword. Nurtured in opinions outspoken and aggressive, Whittier is in consequence a representative poet of America, and an example of the influence of surrounding circumstances. Moreover, while loving his kind most, it must not be denied that he had delight in nature which prompted at leisure hour as noteworthy expression as that of the poet cloistered at Rydal Mount. Thus with an equipment of intense sympathy for the wronged and a sensibility to the charms of nature, together with circumstances that enlisted his patriotism, it might have

Digitized by Google

been expected that Whittier would have given to the New World a national hymn.

The hymn is a form of expression which forbids the abstract and impersonal; it must thrill with the personal, and, that which is essential and most characteristic of human nature, adoration and passionate love. A religious hymn is coherent with singleness of sentiment, and its history shows that the more human the god whose praise is celebrated, the more godlike the poet, his inspiration through communion of spirit with Him who is spirit and truth. These enthusiasms of the hour are the heritage of the human spirit; potentially they existed in primeval man as the form of the plant exists in the seed. And, therefore, the religious hymn expresses a universal sentiment, a sentiment that has no local genesis. On the contrary, the national hymn is born of special conditions, such as were to outward seeming at hand when Whittier's muse was most eloquent of themes laden with patriotism, — themes neither abstract nor impersonal, and which seemed but the advance expression which at last would coalesce into an immortal praise-offering, voicing the sentiments that

Digitized by Google

came forth in the broken phrases of the "Hymn to America," and later in the few stanzas of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," sentiments which his uncoveted activity in public life indorsed but which his muse failed to sing. And because of this failure on the part of a representative poet when so many conditions were favorable it is apparent that a national hymn is not a product of the accomplished poet, but its origin is in a crystallization of common thought whose outcropping may be found where expression by verse is rare and among the unpracticed and illiterate, the national bard a product of the "plain people," whence the sinews of the state. It is thus the history of the evolution of the actualization of the ideal repeats itself, spontaneity of expression, untutored and unschooled, bearing off the laurel, having successfully competed with an acknowledged oracle even, through closeness of heart to the secret springs of nature.

The poets of New England were all patriot poets, distinguished for their unsleeping loyalty, while few can claim that most enviable quality which distinguishes a national poet, a quality that would declare an unmistakable

Digitized by Google

nativity. James Russell Lowell prophesies in the setting of his foreign-derived theme, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," — this being New England scenes and clime, — the coming of an American muse whose far-off voice is now echoed in Southern and Western song. But Emerson leads these pipers on their native heath, clearing from the way a rout of transatlantic English poets in an imperial security that is only possible when genius is loyal to the country of its birth.

A poet's species is discoverable by comparison, and Emerson is discriminated by means of contrast to Tennyson, the latter more often found singing behind carefully trimmed hedgerows, the former far afield, his limit the horizon. The personality of Tennyson was austere, genial to a chosen few and those who acknowledged his high plane. An intellectual aristocrat even in his broad grasp of human feeling, his verse is academic when rich with depth of sentiment. Emerson was hospitable to the extent of forgetfulness of himself. To all whose love of truth was patent his large heart opened, and that artisan hand, characteristic of his stock, grasped the seeking visitor's palm

Digitized by Google

reassuringly. Tennyson dwelt upon the individual charm of his thought, forgetting his reticence to illustrate it, his manner suggesting a claim to primogeniture in the art of poetry, so exhibiting a personal triumph at a happy expression of the ideal, while Emerson beamed at the development of a truth, forgetting his own authorship and regarding a new idea as a chip from the Absolute liable to fly off at any application of the chisel of human reason, — his or his neighbors, — so establishing a copartnership with humanity in search of truth. He had, however, a Buddhistic self-poise, a keen sense of personal privilege in choice of spiritual viands, this individual decision making intrusion impossible. And his amiable courtesy often hedged him about as completely as the hauteur of Tennyson repelled unwelcome espionage. A scion of a north country baron of Old England, there was a tradition of rank in the American poet's attitude equally with assurances of fellowship, these traits in a peculiar manner suggesting a stalwart maintainer of a republic where brain is the House of Peers, where "a man 's a man," and much after the heart of Robert Burns, — a poet

Digitized by Google

blighted through exile from nature owing to lack of wisdom such as prompted our New World poet to retreat from "the proud world" to his native heather, there to carol uninterruptedly, rejoicing as a poet may in the infinite flow of life and the perpetuity of a beauty that "needs no excuse for being."

Emerson's retirement was bidden by an instinct of self-preservation, for a close contact with his kind was likely to despoil him of that serenity whose grace was his chief characteristic. He must look at human nature with the landscapist's vision, its grosser features transfigured in the sphere of inspiration and prophecy.

A poet is a priest, his people of the inner realm, and whom he meets soul to soul while traversing the unseen. The poet's benediction is pronounced in the solitudes, not in cities, or where striving multitudes congregate; for at touch of barbed front of human emulation the most amiable poet turns savage, or, like Edgar Poe and Robert Burns, dissolute, a despair chilling their souls, hope withered like an orchid by the touch of frost, — a danger Emerson fled, the proof of his wisdom shown by the added calm of his spirit.

Digitized by Google

Moreover, he had that in him that repelled bondage, and therefore the rules of verse were often ignored, this disinclination to the restraints of measure showing that his was an independent spirit recking little of academic rule, so contrasting with Tennyson's delight in metrical finish, this giving a musical ring to his song as sweet as the flow of a mountain rivulet.

It has been an occasion of criticism that Emerson should lend his influence to Whitman's installation among the poets; but whatever may be said of the latter poet's strenuous verse (in which it were desirable to weed out an audacity of mistaken candor), there was in the disposition of the former a similar manful audacity, the spirit of the man aroused, for Emerson possessed a fearlessness in speech whose armed irony, though sheathed in courtesy, did not fail of its mark. Neither poet feared to speak the truth, while both were constant in deriding sham; moreover, the earnestness of the "good gray poet" was as fervent as the sincerity of the seer. Thence the recognition by the elder of the younger poet in that famous visit when it happened that counsel was given and rejected — re-

Digitized by Google

jected because of insensibility to the dignity of reserve, an excess of naturalness savoring of that brawn and muscle out of which human nature is lifting itself, luring the then youthful poet to extravagances which betray a foreshortened sight.

However, when averse criticism has done its utmost, Whitman will stand where the kindly hand of Emerson designated his place. His verse is vigorous, and but to read "O Captain, My Captain," is to acknowledge in him a bard worthy our young new world of letters, in which, be it added, maudlin verse has no place, nor in truth that tribe of *infusoria* with too little substance to be opaque and whose vagaries are often weak solutions of minor English poets.

Intuition of the balance and rhythm necessary to verse is inherited by man and therefore a common possession; but language is less an intuition than an acquired possession, and it is the limitation of language that secures permanency to tonal expression, tone alone thus being an avenue to the spirit, whence the word becomes a living thing, apprehended and assimilated.

Discrimination in use of words gains as the

Digitized by Google

sense of tone is more or less acute, whence it happens that the poet's vocabulary is distinguished for its euphony. The poet's ear, nice in its demands, is not satisfied with half expression; there must be a union of sound and sense. Emerson's speech was often delayed from want of a right word which, when it was captured, was hailed with a note of emphasis out of all proportion to its place, this habit disclosing a poet's intuitions; and his ideas were sometimes shot out as in a rapture at discovery of a means of expression, and in both his prose and his poetry there are irregularities, breathing places, so to speak, that ruffle the sheer gloss of the current of thought, a trait that cannot be called a defect, since nothing is lost thereby; on the contrary, after these breathing places there is emphasis of fervid expression speeding one to unexpected heights.

Emerson's earnestness occasionally suggested a dictatorial temper which his demeanor denied, and this is the converse of Tennyson's speech and manner (if not among his compeers). Neighborliness marked the daily life of the one, and reserve that of the other, and it is in these and other differences more and

Digitized by Google

more the two poets are perceived to be of a different species. Put to the extreme test, that of transportation, the one into the other's country, their misplacement would be apparent.

Digitized by Google

XII

DIVERSIFIED FORMS OF EXPRESSION

THE impulse to express emotion in rhythmic and melodic forms is a common heritage of man, and song is either an expression of joy or grief, among the earliest examples of versification variations between these extremes of emotion often determining the length of the song, a sustained effort and a bridge of transition uninvented until an advance in means of expression made this possible.

It is recorded that the Egyptian lyre had but three strings; the Greek improved upon this by adding another string, the time which elapsed between this improvement and the prior invention of the Egyptian instrument not as yet determined; then a thousand years or more elapsed before the tetrachord, the four-stringed instrument of the Greeks, suggested the double octave; but slow as the progress, these successive evolutions in form

Digitized by Google

of musical instruments typify the development of the forms of verse. It is only in an advanced civilization when metre and measure are remarkable for variations, and, meeting the demand of varied emotions result of change of state or change of scene, mastery over these variations is sign of genius apart from the originality of ideas expressed, as the mastery over an instrument is evidence of talent if the instrumentalist is incapable of musical composition. It is this genius for varied versification that differentiated the minnelieders from the troubadours, the latter using one foot (the *Iambus*), and the former an increasing number, diversified according to emotions expressed, the final result being the perfected mode of expression assumed severally by the poets of the eighteenth century, among whom appeared the great trio, Uhland, Heine, and Goethe; an elaboration of form (which occurred in many lands) that must have destroyed the freshness of poetical thought had not inspiration equaled it, — or rather demanded it, — for in verse as in all other structures, animate or inanimate, form responds to an idea.

Realization of the ideal arrives only

Digitized by Google

through demand of the ideal, whence in fact is the phenomena of nature, all laboring to the end of a more complete formulation of the divine ideal; and as nature elaborated her methods so has the poet, both nature and poet handling their imagery with increasing skill.

Moreover, broadening mentality in human nature could not do otherwise than increase its skill in expression, man being the child of nature and obedient to its trend. It is the lyric element in verse heard in the crude song of the Indian mother winning her papoose to slumber that, elaborated into metre, carries with it the hearts of the people. In the lyric is imbedded the sigh and cry of the human spirit; here is the *saaṃana* of the Hindu, the profound and moving expressions of the heart so formulated into musical measure and seeming naturalness that it is like the spontaneous cantata of the lark.

And of all the forms conjured up by the lyric muse none excels that of the sonnet, the growth of which may be traced from the couplet, the so-called stornella, which was sung accompanied by the lute, this instrument as suited to the simple lines as was David's harp to heroic verse.

Digitized by Google

The complete elaboration of the couplet into sonnet form was accomplished by Petrarch, who sang his compositions accompanied by this instrument, his voice admirably adapted to the purpose, it being sweet and flexible. But it should be noted that if the Petrarch sonnet is an elaboration of the couplet, in its structure is traceable that five-toned scale which is universal to earlier music and in which is suggested a subtile law of a tonal force fundamental to all expression. And it may be claimed that though apparently artificial it is a raiment of the spirit whereby character is indubitably shown. Personality is not disguised if the form has become generic, the sonnet being therefore an outgrowth of man's increasing facility in actualizing the ideal, — in embodying that phenomena of human consciousness accompanying an evolution of mentality.

The Petrarch sonnet is a double poem, a picture being given, then a commentary, an arrangement suggesting the measured notes of a bird followed by a cadenza, or a song on the shore of a lake, for example, its echo heard among the opposite hills, — imagination needing little to track the spirit set

Digitized by Google

loose whereby to descant more fully its delight. The arrangement of this form of sonnet is peculiarly suggestive of the systematization of tone a few centuries prior to its creation when harmony was introduced into musical composition, for it is an amplification, so to speak, of the less elaborate versification contained in two lines (the stornella) which was but a repetition of the more ancient chants and hymns of praise, these sung to instruments, the sonnet's "fourteen facets," like notes, capable of all variety of expression from grave to gay; and, inferred from the varied character of poetic talent that has employed the sonnet, it may be presumed to be a form peculiarly desirable to the singing souls, these being those who have the instinct of birds and the reason of men.

And if a favorite, the mastery of its intricacies in the poet's development is a sign of a vein of imagination that found restraint of form a means of depth and force of expression; hence its use among poets of striking individuality, for example, Dante, Michael Angelo, and Milton. The sonnet was Wordsworth's benefactor, raising him from platitudes that blank verse fostered in his lei-

Digitized by Google

sure-sated muse. With Byron, a magician in rhythmical aptitude, the sonnet is a vehicle for the expression of emotions that had been scarcely hinted in an easier versification, the sonnet prefacing "The Prisoner of Chillon" being prophetic of that sacrifice to the cause of liberty which ended the poet's life. Here, impersonal, his muse takes the sonnet from the languorous sentiment of the followers of Petrarch into a more intellectual sphere, prophetic of this English poet's development, which unhappily was cut short, — a disaster more lamentable than the early death of Keats, for the latter poet had acquired a shrine in the hearts of those who, like himself, acknowledge both the "principle of beauty" and "eternal being."

It is the occasional verse, as in "The Prayer of Nature" (an appeal of human nature), that the martyr to Greece — and also to a passionate rebellion against accidental deformity in an ill-starred childhood and youth — may be measured the nobility of Lord Byron's poetic power, for these poems show —

> "Something that gives our feeble light
> A high immunity from Night,
> Something that leaps life's narrow bars

Digitized by Google

To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;
A seed of sunshine that doth leaven
Our earthly dullness with the beams of stars,
And glorify our clay
With light from fountains elder than the Day." [1]

The remarkable dignity attained in Byron's sonnet, compared with the lighter strain in "Childe Harold," which is written in the Spenserian stanza and whose latitude permits all variation of feeling, discloses that most admirable quality in the sonnet of restraint both to redundancy and the graceless thought. There is always an unwillingness to unbosom one's trivial emotions in a shout while this is done frequently enough in continuous prattle, and the sonnet, of the nature of an exclamation of delight or sorrow, of a momentary impression, a single theme, an *eidullia*, puts a barrier to insignificance. Over-much versification is the wide doorway to paucity of sentiment, and the briefer forms of verse are like a tutor commanding silence to the end of meditation.

It is doubtful if anything more complete as an expression of moving passion, together with a delicacy of thought, than the "Portuguese Sonnets" was ever written. The dainty

[1] James Russell Lowell, "Commemoration Ode."

Digitized by Google

grace and sparkling charm of Mrs. Browning's spirit is here held as in a chalice of crystal. In many of the Spanish sonnets there is found a similar strain, that language, blending the richness of the German tongue with the melody of the Italian, lending itself to the sentiments of the heart. Petrarch's sonnets are also comparable to Mrs. Browning's in choice of simile, Italy's skies nourishing a tenderness that found its expression on Perugino's canvases, a refinement which has not departed from the French sonnet.

Of the German poets it may be said sentiments as full of grace have led to formulation in verse as those which appear in the "Portuguese Sonnets." But neither the Spanish, Italian, French, or German sonnet surpasses Mrs. Browning's inimitable work. In this comparison, however, it should be remembered that the impulse to the latter poet's production was secure of remarkable results, for in the devotion of Mr. Browning, to whom the sonnets are dedicated, there was every instigation to the highest perfection. These two poets were in truth like twin stars interdependent even in their separate spheres, for the powers of the one accelerated the

Digitized by Google

force of the other; if they labored apart and with closed doors the influence of each on the other overcame all boundaries, their high purpose one. A representative union, it would be pleasant to believe this human pair a prophecy of retrieval of Eden's disaster.

Mrs. Browning's sonnets arising out of these perfect conditions are incomparable to Shakespeare's sonnets, though in the tempest of his surprised delight on first reading them Mr. Browning suggests a possible comparison. Shakespeare's sonnets have a smouldering fire in them, an elaboration and magnificence that is the essence of a sensuous virility, which, overlading his verse, often scorches the mesh wherein he set his passion. The sonnet, a silken mesh, fares better where lighter zephyrs blow and in the ether of gentler emotion. Even that golden-belted Bacchus, Swinburne, is often too overladen, and like a drunken bee breaks through the restraining mesh set by Mrs. Browning's intuition, the substance of his theme more suited to the drama than the sonnet. Genuineness is unmistakable in the "Portuguese Sonnets," imagination has not been whipped to the froth of an uninspired fervor, and together

Digitized by Google

with adornment of sudden fancy there is a kernel of chaste passion befitting this form of verse which must be like an opal, milk-white with a heart of flame. Mrs. Browning's imaginative nature was supplemented by a musical aptitude not equal but similar to that possessed by Shelley, but she handled her subjects in the longer poems after the fashion of Tennyson, who combined the gravity of Wordsworth with the metrical finish of Shelley. In Tennyson, however, while there is reverence, profound analysis, and rhythm, there is little spontaneity, a quality necessary to that form in which Mrs. Browning achieved her greatness.

The sonnet demands a high tide of that inward sea of emotion whose break upon the shore of words is rhythmic but restrained. It is restraint disclosed in Mrs. Browning's sonnets that sets them apart from women's verse; suggesting more than is expressed, they incite the imagination to pass the limits of words, a quality that is discoverable in German lyrics. The ode demands a similar restraint, though its form is more plastic, for the personal element in an ode is often its special characteristic and this element demands always a judicious reticence.

Digitized by Google

Keats was at his maximum of power in both forms, the ode and the sonnet, for he had the Shakespearean mastery of language turning its numerous facets to catch the light of fancies replete with suggestion. His attitude was never self-assertive like that of Byron, who was apparently least satisfied with the impersonal and universal, wherefore Keats's affinity to Hellenic thought and Byron's realism and modernism. That Keats was moulded by the influences of natural phenomena is everywhere evident in his poems. He perceived the verities whence natural phenomena arise also, hence, the value of his work and its imperishableness, — its very incompleteness a charm, like Michael Angelo's unfinished marbles, implying some condition yet to be fulfilled, the hand removed for the moment. Achievement in formulation gratifies the senses, but an arrest at the brink of expression is as suggestive as a finger on the lip.

If deplorable the limitation of Keats's works, more deplorable is it to the poet if he overwrites himself, — a defect into which many authors fall. The second part of Goethe's "Faust" fails in the interest of the

Digitized by Google

first; Browning is often redundant, as in "Paracelsus;" and it is in these defects there is a sign of change in methods of expression, prose becoming the vehicle sought by the prolific mind, the novel assumed as a means of broader expression, both idealism and realism finding therein a theatre suited to the requirements of that duality which is the component of human nature. Sir Walter Scott, in his poetry commonplace, through the novel wins the admiration of the world. Victor Hugo is great principally in the production of "Les Misérables." Goethe, though a dramatic poet, finds it necessary for fuller expression of concepts arising from his comprehensive study of the world-spirit to write a novel. These writers, lengthy as were their productions, won acclamation throughout Christendom, and the novel, as a literary vehicle for philosophic, humane, and romantic sentiment, became thereafter a means of greater influence towards intellectual growth than poetry. Establishing an equilibrium between idealism and realism, fostering imagination and educating perception, satisfying the intelligence of man without demanding the exclusion of the one or other factor,

Digitized by Google

the novel is one of the causes of the decline of poetry, verse becoming an adjunct to literary expression, a means of expression relegated to the few whose nature demands that which alone can be expressed by way of rhythmic measure, tone bestowing what the so-called sixth sense is claimed to bestow on man.

Furthermore, if the comprehensiveness of the novel is one cause of the decline of poetry, there was yet another force in the field of expression that, opening means of presentation of human feeling equally with rhythm and metre, by surpassing poetry in these lines, did much towards its eclipse, and this force, as has been implied, was music. Musical composition gave to German ideality, for example, a means of expression that Germany's many forms of literature could not provide, even though her language contains deposits of applied words, each latent with human experience, their tap-root in the sources of language itself.

Music gave utterance to emotions that Italian painting failed to express, and hence arose the Italian opera. Yet, it will be asked, is it not evident in the opera that poetry is

Digitized by Google

the basis of musical composition in so far as its sentiment is concerned, since its themes are borrowed from the subjects first selected and elaborated by the poet? But, we answer, poetry is rhythmic music. It is in music that ideality finds its complete expression, hence its breadth of foundation in Germany where the energies of imagination gave birth to multifarious inventions, these requiring an ideality which, applied to music, gave birth to German compositions.

And this ideality, shown by inventions of practical use, had a mathematical quality which is more necessary to music than to poetry, for in a limited sense music is a science, poetry an art. Hence it may be assumed that in the rise of music there was the dawn of the scientific age, the influence of which is subversive of the reign of the muse of poetry, notwithstanding its long reign, — and whence, moreover, the success of a combination of poetry and music, the one subordinated to the other as in Wagner's operas; for this composer rehearses the tragic experiences of the human spirit through adaptation of folk-lore to his compositions, and thus includes modern consciousness and

Digitized by Google

archaic genuineness, concerning which two factors it may be said that the archaic (folk-lore) is single and direct, modern consciousness complex and indirect, two factors admirably fitted to the expression of the emotions of human nature.

The ineffectiveness of poetry to win popular preference was occasion of other combinations, such as the modern drama. Dramatic poems fulfill the requirements that are perpetually enforced, — that is, a gratification of both the eye and ear, whence the success of the opera.

Appliances in presenting the dramatic poem were of the simplest character in the beginning. Prior to the Greek stage and its quaint appointment the drama was merely a masquerade, its setting such environment as nature offered; when the Hellenic drama declined, together with Greece's high estate, the drama, surviving in the Mystery Plays of Western Europe, provided little else. Even in Shakespeare's day, when all forms of literature flourished, the tragedy and the comedy alike were performed without accessories legitimate to their themes. Nevertheless, so satisfactory the method of expression, the

Digitized by Google

drama continued to gain in power, its influence but stayed temporarily by rigor of Puritan maledictions, these leveled often more at the levity than at the literature of the stage.

The English drama in its earlier form possessed the defect of redundancy, as did English poetry, and the change of attitude towards all literary work is shown by the pruning necessary to place Shakespeare's plays on the stage. In poetry the epic of eleven books like the Æneid finds only occasional readers, and in the drama it is the student who reads the many-act play. This early redundancy, shorn away by modern pruning, is avoided by later dramatists. M. Rostand completes his work with the firmness of Phidias, his idea chiseled directly, and with a master's security of both conception and expression. The same may be said of Maeterlinck, who deals with the mystical as one who is familiar with things beyond the boundary of sense, his idealism at the same time clothed in a Rembrandt realism.

The composite nature of the drama and the opera is an expression of the evolution of intelligence; it betrays the continued demand of the human spirit by means of the

Digitized by Google

understanding and perceptions to formulate the ideal. Engaging the ear, the form delights the eye, the one an avenue whence attentiveness and consideration are derived, and the other a means of security of apprehension; combined methods whereby arise all educative influences wherein outward phenomena lend their universality to inward life, they are an expression of the trend of human evolution.

Digitized by Google

XIII

THE SONNET AND PROPHECY

CLOSELY allied to music in its structural completeness, the sonnet is a literary organism, so to speak; satisfying the judgment as does the Parthenon, a crystal, or a rose, its form has been assumed as a vehicle for the more exalted moods of joy, grief, friendship, love, or philosophic reverie. Emphasis always desirable in these moods, it permits that *da capo* assumed in musical composition, giving force by the final note in the last stanza, as, for instance, when descanting on the afflicting conditions of blindness Milton at close of his noble verse pens the memorable line: —

"They also serve who only stand and wait," —

rhyme and sentiment a response to that which had gone before.

Michael Angelo, discovering the sonnet's perfection of mould, thus enshrines his varied emotions, and as in sentiments attendant on

Digitized by Google

his enigmatical devotion to Vittoria, — the one romance of his life, — so also his impassioned admiration for Dante is summarized in a line[1] as trenchant as Milton's verse, a comparison that suggests the compensation of imagination, as both poets dreamed of Paradise, the soul shut in its own Eden.

That Italy's sculptor, painter, architect, and poet, Michael Angelo, on donning his singing robes gave preference for the restraining measure of the sonnet, declares its availability for an expression of the most profound emotions that the human heart is capable of. And it is significant that this great Italian had due regard for the often quoted suggestion of Petrarch that the thought should be borne in upon the reader at close.

It is in adherence to this rule that unity is acquired between theme and rhythm, the reverberant close providing a melodious echo to the ear while emphasizing the thought. And here may be mentioned the charming conceit that the recurrent rhyme of the

[1] "Ne'er walked the earth a greater man than he," rendered into English. See Mrs. Ednah Cheney's *Sonnets of Michael Angelo.*

Digitized by Google

sonnet is suggested by the bells of grazing herds, and that these echoing bells in the far-famed Valley of Provence induced its name. But this conceit should not take the honor of the inception of the sonnet from the two stanzas, the so-called stornella, which, traceable to the most ancient form of rhythmic expression, provided an impetus to a reduplication of stanzas, these finally developing into the fourteen lines characterizing a sonnet. Nor should it be forgotten that this evolution is due to Fra Guittone, "musical brother" of the Roman Church, equally a participant in the honor of developing lyric forms of verse with Pier della Vigne,[1] state secretary to Frederic II.; for it is a proof that the sonnet, as also musical harmony, had its cradle in the cloister, a fact that is an example of the activity of traditional habits of song exercised where barrenness of surrounding would seem to induce barrenness of mind, the cloister inducing meditation as did blindness to the bards of Greece and England, — to Homer, Milton, and yet later that sad singer, Philip Marston, — its serenity making the soul vocal, when

[1] MSS. 1332.

Digitized by Google

the yeoman, whose daily life is abounding in association with natural beauty, is dumb. But it may be rightly contended that the climes of Provence and of Sicily are equally associated with the development of the sonnet, environment assuredly giving a trend to genius, though not creating it, and this especially where "open air" is the common resort of all the world, while to natural phenomena are properly traced influences that gave rise to the love-sonnet. It is the village green whereon are heard the lute and mandolin, the player singing to love in sonnet or madrigal, the musical tinkle of the mandolin, unobtrusive as the purl and flow of a rivulet, through delicacy of sound admirably suited to the spirit of the song. In ancient Provence there was a rivalry among troubadours to exalt feminine grace and

"The hourly mercy of a woman's soul,"

the incalculable influence of which is now felt in the world, the immediate origin of that influence in the adoration of motherhood through the apotheosis of Mary, the mother of Christ, which was impetus to the chivalry of an unlettered knighthood, whose

Digitized by Google

songs so often took a lyric form, as in the sonnet (its tonal structure satisfying the fastidious *preux chevalier*) was embodied the tender adorations of the lover of a subsequent period.

Southern climes have been fertile in love lyrics, for they celebrate emotions common to elemental nature which here rise to the surface, all the world "outdoors" and under the sky. In the southern clime is more observable that enjoyment of agreeable tone that is universal to lower animate life, and which is an heritage of human nature. Here are discovered vestiges of a mental condition suggestive of the cradle of Eden where man lived in familiar association with those more orderly children of God, our elder brothers, the birds and beasts of field and forest. In these summer climes man sings hymns to the God immanent in nature as spontaneously as the rivers chant their way to the sea, wherefore the place of the lyric's birth, and the final evolution of that crowned queen of lyrics, the sonnet.

It is in the sweet south where love carols; and there is a suggestion of the aria of a long-tarrying summer in Mrs. Browning's

Digitized by Google

sonnets, the language English, the spirit Italian.

The very English Milton betrays an Italian influence in his verse, while our Longfellow, English in sentiment, is most inspired in his memorable three sonnets preliminary to a translation of the "Divina Commedia." And thus on the austere and self-contained, or the gentle and refined, the far effect of a southern clime is notable, the pervasive power of natural phenomena shown as the incense of a bank of violets far-blown by the "sweet south." The student of Persian verse, for example, is soon penetrated by a breath from a sun-warmed soil, lyric-lilacs calling the spirit away from "chilled regions ribbed with ice," the sigh of the soul ever being for summer and fair skies.

Yet, if the English sonnet is suggestive of southern climes, it is evident that other influences have wrought out a diversity of sentiment owing to which the poet Keats perceived that a divergence from the arrangement of the Petrarchan sonnet was desirable, this deviation such as had been made by Shakespeare.

Keats's muse was not influenced by Italian

Digitized by Google

methods of expression except indirectly. The spirit of Greek art moved him most, as indicated by his sonnet on "Chapman's Homer;" and in this when set beside a Petrarchan sonnet there is a suggestion of the difference between similar high notes struck upon a violin and a violoncello — a difference, to change the figure, like that which surprises the eye when suddenly turned from a Greek *chef d'œuvre* to an Italian. So also to read "Ozymandias" by Shelley and at the same time Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "True Woman" is suddenly to be aware of the remarkable distinction that may be found in similar forms of verse, the tonal structure not limiting but providing for a diversity of emotion, as is the case with the sonnet: —

TRUE WOMAN.

To be a sweetness more desired than Spring;
A bodily beauty more acceptable
Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns the fell;
To be an essence more environing
Than wine's drained juice; a music ravishing
More than the passionate pulse of Philomel, —
To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's swell,
That is the flower of life, how strange a thing!

How strange a thing to be what man can know
But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own screen

Digitized by Google

Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliest glow;
Closely withheld, as all things most unseen,—
The wave-bowered pearl, the heart-shaped seal of green
That flecks the snowdrop underneath the snow.

OZYMANDIAS.

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read,
Which yet survive (stamped on these lifeless things)
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:—
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty! and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away!"

The hot pulses of the southerner are felt in the rhythm of Rossetti's sonnets, and this even while the poet is an exile, for Italy's impassioned son is astray where English hedgerows determine nature's boundaries instead of the Alps and blue-mantled bay — a mischance of environment, however, to the Italian poet as ineffective in suppressing his natural heritage as those deplorable conditions encompassing Lord Byron's early

Digitized by Google

manhood, who, nevertheless, was apt to brood on their marks even when giving evidence of the characteristics of a sturdy son of a northern clime capacitated to efface them, this brooding on extraneous influences particularly betrayed in the statement, introductory to "Childe Harold," that this poem —

> "Showed that early perversion of mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures and disappointment in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature and the stimulus of travel on a soul so constructed and misdirected were ineffective," —

a statement which is better borne out by triviality of thought than by "Childe Harold's" sustained measure.

Byron's metrical leash was never slack; an accelerant movement ran through his verse declaring a vigorous mind, as also an Anglo-Saxon nativity, even if the subject were derived from experiences in the south. He could not, if he would, set the chime of rhyme to the tinkle of bells on woolly flocks in the valley of primrose dalliance, his metre ever suggesting the quickstep of passionate unrest or a continued impetus toward some high goal. Consequently where the ficti-

Digitized by Google

tious sentiment demands languor of sentiment the cumulative measure overrides the thought at a gallop, and instead of a sated muse a victory is the poet's escutcheon! Lord Byron's pretenses, his masquerade in the garb of the extreme vices of his age, continually dropped away from an underlying earnestness (which is an inheritance of genius), and unknown to himself there is an evidence of a poet's great mission in some sudden turn of thought, a nobler strain issuing from his pen, the depth of whose current was declared at last, his life dedicated to a purpose as unexpected as it was magnanimous; but here the threads of life were cut, as often happens, the momentous moral change being the signal for immediate transplantation.

Introspection, together with egoism, mar the beauty of "Childe Harold," and these defects are not uncommon in women's poetry, a personal and morbid sentiment disclosing limitation of sympathy for aught beyond the pale of a narrow individual experience. It is necessary while voicing emotion to shun personal idiosyncrasies, so to avoid the expression of trivial impressions while actual-

Digitized by Google

izing those elemental passions constituting the basis of human nature, and whose kaleidoscopic changes are as varied as the seasons, nymphs of the sun.

Mrs. Browning's success lies in an expression of sentiments universal to the experiences of the heart, and all those poems which have a general grasp of the tendencies of human nature while participating in the drama of love are of enduring quality, their influence unevanescent and permanent. The lyric quality of women's verse, especially noticeable in the great Englishwoman's sonnets, gives it place particularly in the expression of tender sentiment; a sentiment that includes, as in Christina Rossetti's verse, self-renunciation, an attribute distinguishing human nature at that period which is germinal to absorption of self in love of another, and which nevertheless is an era of a magnetic personal attraction, a period very precisely illustrated in the germination of a rose, this being a time when the plant bestows itself in the midst of a sphere of fragrance upon the seed. It is the necessity of life that it should give itself — so is it that life is more abundant, and true of life, true of love.

Digitized by Google

Christina Rossetti did not fail to perceive this law, as the following sonnet shows: —

"*Amor, che ne la mente mi ragiona.*" — DANTE.
"*Amor vien nei bei viso di costei.*" — PETRARCH.

If there be any one can take my place
And make you happy whom I grieve to grieve,
Think not that I can grudge it, but believe
I do commend you to that nobler grace,
That readier wit than mine, that sweeter face;
Yea, since your riches make me rich, conceive
I, too, am crowned while bridal crowns I weave,
And thread the bridal dance with jocund pace.

For if I did not love you, it might be
That I should grudge you some one dear delight.
But since the heart is yours that was mine own,
Your pleasure is my pleasure, right my right,
Your honorable freedom makes me free,
And, you companioned, I am not alone.

The special attribute of this poem is the delicate insistence of love in holding its allegiance whatever the accident of circumstance, that allegiance inevitably resting upon a basis established in the primaries of human nature.

There are notable examples in America of the lyric quality shown in Miss Rossetti's sonnets, and among these are Mrs. Moulton's sonnets, the sentiment being suggestive of a tenderness that is characteristic of

Digitized by Google

those earlier writers who adopted this form of verse with eminent success, as Camoens, so also many French lyrists, for her themes are laden with gentle meditation, nor too grave nor too gay, rudeness of tone unrisked.

Edith Thomas's lyre, now stilled, gave promise of rare tone, her verse suggesting by its classic clearness of expression the influence of Greek thought, a soil well chosen for early cuttings if native loam be given, this supplied increasingly as adolescence is reached.

It is of interest to note the strengthening chord of the Shakespearean lyre in the use of the sonnet. Shakespeare's muse indeed has been the inspiration of many lyrics east and west, north and south.

This sonnet, for example, perhaps the most remarkable for its chaste though intense passion, has traits of expression that lead to the analysis of every sonnet on love penned since the dramatist's time, the result being to find a likeness that is discoverable in diverse roses, the distinction being that certain species are laden with fragrance to the last petal of the corolla and others evanescent

Digitized by Google

and restricted to the centre, that being, in the sonnet, its procreant idea: —

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
  Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
  Or bends with the remover to remove:
Oh no; it is an ever fixèd mark
  That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
  Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
  Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
  But bears it out even unto the edge of doom.
    If this be error and upon me proved,
    I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

It is a memorable peculiarity of Shakespearean dramas that the scenes and subjects of many of the more engaging are derived from Italy; and as in the drama so in the sonnet is found the unstinted warmth of southern feeling. Breaking away from Petrarchan structure, building more freely as his prodigal fancy demanded, Shakespeare is still Italianesque in his sympathies, and his influence on the English sonnet savors little of the Anglo-Saxon genius. It is in a land of summer skies the birds nest and sing, and summer skies bid the poets carol,

Digitized by Google

since those ancient days when the Aryan race was cradled in the verdant valleys of the East, and it is notable that flocks of singers of northern clime, like the great dramatist, in their sweeter strain harp as if born in the south, so great is the yearning for a natural environment, a life in the open, free of the bondage of sheltering walls. The lays of Chaucer are brimming over with summer like a spring river; and such the strains of all that English aftermath of nature lovers among whom in unobtrusive garb is Jean Ingelow, whose spontaneous outbursts suggests a mountain ousel soaring as it sings.

New England may claim a singer of similar sympathies in Emily Shaw Forman, if of less range of expression. Mistress of sonnet structure, it is in her "Sonnets of the Wild Flowers" that is perceived an impassioned love of nature, a ruddy warmth of adoration that while descriptive of a realm where the flowery children of the sun have learned to be wary of prodigality of bloom, yet shows a largeness of emotion, gift of a far-off heritage, evoked by tropic abundance. Strictly true to the special graces of each

Digitized by Google

flower of her circlet of opals, Mrs. Forman gives the tender grace of sentiment which Petrarch gave to his sonnets to Laura. Each flower, indeed, is a nymph disporting itself in sun and air, bright or bleak, with a personal charm, and the author, thus declaring her powers of interpretation, also wins way toward the bard's fane.

Interpretation of nature is the function of the true poet, — its phenomena of form the expression of effluent life, — and it is this interpretation that has given Emerson his authority in respect to the processes whereby the estrangement between men self-exiled from Eden may be resisted, his ethics being based on the common destiny as the common origin of humanity; his principles those on which is based the ark of covenant of the United States.

And through recognition of these principles Emma Lazarus — a daughter of that race whence came the inspiration of our forefathers at founding of this Republic — assumed the place of a bard prophetic of a new era: —

Digitized by Google

THE NEW COLOSSUS.

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed sunset gate shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp," cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me —
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

This sonnet is reverberant of the lyre struck by David's hand many centuries before it befell that the Hebraic people were exiles in every country alike, until crossing the seas they came to the New World. It has the force of sentiment only possible to genuine inspiration.

The poet's ear may be trusted to catch the key of popular feeling. He who wrote the Marseillaise had heard its leading note in town and country; and were there not a demand for a solution of the vexed problem how to lift toil to the level of nature's joyous labor, the Angelus never would have wrought

Digitized by Google

out in the verse of Edwin Markham its protest, which, bringing the world vociferant about the poet's ears, turned attention to the fact that poetic voices were at matins on the Pacific slope, an event prophesied in the verse of Joaquin Miller and emphasized in the poem, "The Man with the Hoe," a poem conspicuous by striking the keynote of a people's unrest.

In the "Recessional" is heard a chord struck in Cromwell's time, and of a higher note, since it arouses a spirit questioning the influences set abroad through dominance of a militant force, — a force that too readily may degenerate, and the descendants of the Puritans become a fateful octopus to less mature races.

It is in these two poems — "The Man with the Hoe" and the "Recessional" — are uttered the vital interests of the opening century, the titles of the poems as descriptive as the verse, retrogression being threatened and toil the topic of the day.

The poet's soul is a magnet of truths flying like cherubs from an invisible throne; it is he who inspires the world-spirit, and while betraying wrong declares that there is

Digitized by Google

hope for human nature in human nature; — if in this fair new world gain is seen dancing like a satyr on his hoofs, greed playing the hornpipe, the poet singing down the heights demands recognition of a strong new Spirit abroad, who *lifts her lamp beside the golden door.*

The existence of truth is proved by condemnation of the false, and while immersed in base ambitions governments scheme, lay the knife to the throat of young liberty, crush under the heel the weak, there echoes along the corridors of time a Marseillaise, a Recessional, a Toiler's Reproach, and ere the reverberations cease there arises a Nemesis which slays the slayer: for evil is temporary, good eternal.

Digitized by Google

XIV

INFLUENCES AND RESULTS

THE effect of natural environment is apparent in the trend of the poet's thought as in the painter's theme, but that effect is equally apparent in the force of expression in the patriot's plea.

It is he who has lived close to nature who moulds national prejudices to broader issues securing a firmer basis for the establishment of popular government. Do we not perceive in the far trend of Abraham Lincoln's views a hint of our wide American plains limited but where the sky meets the horizon? In the eloquence of Daniel Webster is there not the breadth and tumultuous flow of the sea, scintillating imagery and profound truth leaping to light as he elaborates his argument? How compact are his sentences, and well-knit like the muscle of the wide-horned ox! Picturing the massive brow and meditative face of the statesman as he sat by his win-

Digitized by Google

dow at Marshfield and with failing vision looked into the patient eyes of his much prized servants of the yoke, does not there also rise a vision of broad sympathies and an enduring power in the man? Washington, of that stock which may well trace its origin among the Norse Vikings, possessed the instinct of command and power of self-control habitual to one associated with elemental forces, to wait on which is to command them. It is easy to imagine the first President of the United States, a Viking at the helm of a ship in the midst of tempests such as assail the North Sea, calm, vigilant, and self-contained. On the other hand it is easy to imagine Napoleon Bonaparte a leader of those Huns and Poles described in Sienkiewicz's vivid tale of "Fire and Sword," ineffaceable traits marking him a descendant of the Huns and a warrior by heredity. The dramatist M. Rostand has emphasized this law of heredity in "L'Aiglon," representing the King of Rome under the constraining influence of his lineage, German and Corsican, so forcibly that the law has the aspect of a Nemesis such as is weirdly apparent in the Chorus of Sophocles rehearsing the

Digitized by Google

calamitous woes of the House of Labdacus, the fateful event in "L'Aiglon" hastened by the struggle between opposite hereditary traits of character.

Bonaparte is not only an example of the continuity of ferocious instincts in higher animal life, but of their cumulative force when unchecked by those divine attributes which hold in check even the beast of the forest, though it be a fox, a type of animal that the Christ assumed as representative of a cruelty implacable when in pursuit of self-interest. Elemental human nature is not more readily tamed than is the zebra; it often retains the characteristics of the eagle even when successive evolutions have obliterated the outward semblance.

Intellectual development has little power to subordinate these characteristics, for intelligence is not the tap-root of being, but the affections, these resulting in sympathies on which the existence of the human family depends; intelligence, indeed, may become a destructive force as in the case of Bonaparte.

Differing from Washington in the fact that self-aggrandizement was his leading

Digitized by Google

purpose, the Corsican warrior of necessity differed from him in methods of action, these being like those of the eagle, who robs the fish hawk without compunction. Washington's purpose was that of the patriot, his methods humane, and therefore a commonwealth of the common people was the crowning achievement of his noble life.

The difference in the two, Washington and Bonaparte, dwelt in the elemental constitution of their two natures. Each endowed with great force of character, the distinction appears in the steady equilibrium of brain and heart in the former and the atrophy of the heart in the latter; the one humane, the other inhumane; high and noble sympathy on the part of Washington, a treacherous appearance of sympathy on the part of Bonaparte.

Representative personalities in the drama of the evolution of humanity, their end betrays the fact that highly developed mentality is powerless against the divine principle of love, — that brain-power is but an inefficient agent without heart-power.

And these dual powers are necessary for supreme efficiency in literature. Dante's

Digitized by Google

"Divina Commedia" is marred by a vengeful piety, his pen sometimes wielded with the spirit of Attila. Such was the spirit of Michael Angelo goaded by the criticism of "cribbed and cabined brains" whose mean judgments were continued obstacles to the development of his lofty concepts, and both poet and painter appear to a later generation equally implacable in temper, a blot on their noble escutcheon.

The battles of pen and brush are not betrayed by scenes of carnage, but the spirit of war exists in the page and picture if once in the heart of poet and painter. And it is evident that human nature retains the instincts of the fox or the eagle, or wherefore the sudden grapple of nations at chance of prey, if the memorable Treaty in the House of the Wood was not a tiger's embrace?

Unrest accompanies the state which is without balance of heart and brain, for the equilibrium of will and understanding is a necessary condition for an efficient life — if literary or manual, if that of the statesman, of the priest, of the author, the tradesman, the mechanic, the farmer, or the sailor.

The old myth of Justice, with her scales

Digitized by Google

set in the heavens, is founded on fact. The Egyptian pictured in these scales the human heart on one hand, the symbol of truth on the other, immortal well-being so declared dependent on an equipoise, — an illustration that may be brought down into the details of life, and which the history of the individual, as the race, the aggregate individual, enforces.

The phenomena of the skies have ever been of abiding influence upon myth-makers, but it was left to the Egyptian sages to construct a scheme of detailed comparison that presented the immanence of that power in human nature which kept in poise the planetary worlds. And an illustration of the constitution of the soul, its integrity of individual being, as its perpetuity, this comparison provides a singularly coherent argument; the perceptions equipped to map out the necessary details, knowledge of the constitution of mind and matter aid in the analysis. But it is not my purpose here to more than draw a simile, — to note that in the dual constituents of human character, those characterized as brain and heart, there is that which is as dependent upon equal action as are the stars upon

Digitized by Google

centripetal and centrifugal forces, disintegration of personal force as likely to follow disobedience to the law of love as irresponsiveness of solar substances to magnetism.

The purely intellectual man, appealing to reason, finds his influence narrowed from want of response; but let that intellectuality be accompanied by a warm heart, his power is not circumscribed. If he be an orator there is acclamation. "A man," the audience exclaims, "of wonderful magnetism!" — a term universally applied to him who has a warm heart in obedience to the more universal fact that sympathy comes from the heart, — that sympathy is love, a love potent to win the multitude, whose ear is keen to catch the higher note, and so ready to condemn the false.

As with the orator so with the poet. Browning's heart pulsates in the rhythm of his lyrics, his being the balance of heart and brain, a balance that made Shakespeare the chief of dramatists — and lacking it Tennyson missed of becoming one, the drama impossible to his muse.

There is that in plain human nature, if on its own part incapable of inspired speech,

Digitized by Google

which perceives itself wronged when imperfectly represented, and a poet who fails in knowledge of the springs whence the actions of real life is most summarily discarded — lofty as is his polished verse.

The greatness of the Greek drama is in the large way with which elemental human nature is conceived, and this even at the epoch when mentality was, in fact, but in the adolescent stage, being ungrounded in the exact sciences — adolescent and therefore searching for novelty, soaring to the zenith in dreams of beauty, plunging into the nadir in disappointment, a rare, unripe fruit of ages of development. This species of mentality could find no rest, its growing period demanding change and a curious indetermination of views. Having advanced in philosophical breadth, there came a moment when the religious genius of the people restored Dionysus, hero of a truth-laden nature myth, to his wonted temple. For in him was found a crystallization of humanity's early trust, that trust prompted by the all powerful alchemy of the sun to convert the white blood of the vine into ruby nectar, a mystical rite in solar transmutations reën-

Digitized by Google

acted at that mystic marriage when "the conscious water saw its God and blushed" — as told in the legends of Christ.

The Greek genius built up a delicate structure of mystical promise much like frost the glittering of which on the window-pane reports sunrise. There were "impressions" (to use Pindar's phrase) in the air preparing the Greek world for the statement of Socrates, that "*no evil can happen to a good man, whether he be alive or dead,*" a fundamental truth, since to be good is to be at no antagonism with the basis of being.

It is noteworthy that the so-called renaissance in Greece, following which appeared the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, reawakened interest in a nature myth, the story of Dionysus attracting the children of men even when in their adolescence. Whatever progress had been made, there was yet a necessity to enlarge the hope and to return again to that trust which is inherent in human nature and which was bred there by the orderliness of nature. In adolescence the froward youth hastens over the threshold of home, but after many wanderings he returns if happily he may find

Digitized by Google

the mother within. It is all recorded in the annals of the world, — the many wanderings, the Circean perils, the Argonautic search for the Golden Fleece, the knights seeking the Holy Grail. But each wanderer returns to cross the threshold, desirous to hear, Welcome, my son! Nature is the mother of men; it is in her scriptures he reads his certainty of life — if his "food is truth," if his conduct after the orderly movements of "the stars," his nature poised on truth and love, his soul is in no part defective, neither heart nor brain atrophied.

It is the poet whose nearness to nature has given him inspiration, who has emphasized these conclusions of possible blessedness. The parables spoken by Christ drawn from nature, the imagery of the Augustan poets, the delicate symbolism in Roman epic, in Italian, Spanish, German, and French poetry, these appeal to human nature and give perpetuity to the poet's fame. How lingers the spirit of the new century in hearing of Chaucerian carols! How the youthful student gathers inspiration in "Midsummer-Night's Dream," the dramatist following the steps of the lyrist, as indeed

Digitized by Google

following Virgil came Dante, singing of "the bird within its leafy home," — of the doves, even while lifting the mystic curtain on Paolo and Francesca in endless continuance of painful joy, — these birds, inmates of the intricacies of woodland and forest, appearing upon the stern Florentine's page as spontaneously as in their native habitat, he being a lover of nature.

The stately psalmist touches the kindled aspiration of the human spirit by a familiar picture of the beasts of the field, the trees, cedars of Lebanon, and the wild goats. And with like stateliness Milton chants his measured line, his reverie in the shadow of blindness illuminated by remembered scenes impressed upon the sensitive memory of youth.

It may be assumed that the perpetuity of letters dwells largely in this association of human nature with nature (that return to Dionysus, the impersonation of all renaissant life), — an association that is inevitable to the poet.

Nature is the soul's own environment; there is no place for the human spirit outside, nature like human nature being the embodiment of God.

Digitized by Google

It is necessary to return to this home, for here is tranquillity. Here Wordsworth found his serenity and Emerson his theme, this, however, resonant, as has been said, with new world ethics. Regarding human nature as an unlicked cub, it was surely advisable to supplement dame Nature's office on occasion to teach him the proprieties and "the excellence of manners!"

The necessity to the poet's eye and ear for sight and sound in wood and field, his desire for the vocal summer or the muffled winter, is betrayed in Whittier's return to the countryside, where he invokes the Spring, —

"Resurrection and life to the graves of the sod!"

Wherefore did Bryant stir the heart of the "good gray poet"? not by reason of his deeply human "Thanatopsis," but his "Forest Hymn"!

The ministers to the world-soul are cradled in the unwalled theatre of wild woodlands and fields, these ministers not isolated at all times from their kind, but not handicapped by their too continued presence.

The poetic insight gives a universality to nature lyrics, — these assuming the kinship

Digitized by Google

of human nature, — and as all men are swept into the vortex of those emotions that are kindled by sorrow or inspired by joy, it is as if the host were elevated when a Thanatopsis, a Threnody, or a Hymn to Immortality is heard. This common sympathy, if not as thrilling, is felt when Bryant touches his lyre in praise of the fringed gentian, and Emerson chants of the marvel of bloom on the leafless rhodora, — that sympathy recognizant of the Absolute, the principle of life, which is in the white blood of the vine, the azure of the gentian, the flame of the rhodora. Wordsworth's genius also gave birth to twin flowers, his "Hymn to Immortality" and song at meeting a "jocund company" of daffodils disclosing the universality of genius when abroad and in ready touch with life, animate or inanimate. Whitman's preference, however, is significant, and it must be acknowledged that personal passion limits sympathy, and it is the occasional moment only when the poet escapes himself and is lost in a common sentiment. This is notable in Wordsworth's poems: for he harps on the universal and reveals the shallows possible to even a poet, his attitude

Digitized by Google

toward nature often savoring of patronage. To a less self-conscious poet natural phenomena has no private application, and exalting his mood the fretful edge of personal grievances disappear, — not through a Prospero-like argument leveled at airy nothing, but through the poet's grasp of the actual Presence in nature. Whitman's faith is sound to the core. He hears the heart of God beating in the world, His steadying touch on the pulse of man whose body as soul is electric with divine life.

Whence came this poet's preference among the older American poet's verses? It is the poet of nature whose pipings lead to the hills of God, his singing robes woven of moonlit flax and garnished with lilies. Was it not the poet of nature who in the far-off centuries sang under Egyptian skies of an aisle in the nave of the heavens that led the journeying soul to the divine hall of truth, whence, judgment passed, he entered Eden? It was that poet's liberating thought which divined that the concerted action of suns is like that of concerted action of souls, mutuality a necessity of harmony as of perpetuity. Nature, the visible garment of eternal life,

Digitized by Google

inspired the prophet, bard, and poet, whose utterances kindle emotions of adoration, so consecrating human nature; for her children, the little folk of God, are beauty makers, and as they labor, these spinners of bloom on lake, field, and upland give eloquent tribute to an unseen power whose effluence is first love and then beauty, though theirs is a limited expression hinting only at what eye has not seen in realms of "blossoming causes."

Limitation is the characteristic of form, and need one quarrel thereat? Striving for the absolute, is not definition sacrificed? Moreover, are not the elemental passions of human nature a sufficient part of the universal to guarantee its homogeneity in the infinite and absolute? and if being so, what more is there to desire? Not surely to be swallowed up in the infinite, a mischance that makes a void of the future, the soul of man exhaling like a dewdrop in the trackless air! The particular included in the universal has a special function, and not suited to the impersonal the human soul strengthens itself, demanding at the same time a completeness of outfit that will secure protection from disintegration or indeed from

Digitized by Google

intimacy of being, the I MYSELF ever on guard, each soul living and dying solitary, a gem crystallized from the Absolute.

Moreover, as individualism is a product which is betrayed increasingly by a developed mentality, interest in individual life, outgrowth of mental attitudes, increases, wherefore the demand for the presentation of marked character in literature, as by the modern novel. Poetry deals most happily with those moving energies of the human spirit which invite idealization, but the novel is realistic, analyzing centres of action, purposes, and events. Bidden by an increasing complexity in life, outcome of a more complex individualism in the human race, the novel has established itself as a forcible factor in literature.

The province of both art and literature is not diverse, each laboring to show what God means when He permits the evolution of a soul in human mould. That art has not failed to record the changes of that mould, structure plastic, bone and muscle like melting wax under the imperious force of a growing spirit, is evident. To art is due the most convincing testimony of those changes,

Digitized by Google

— changes that are an assurance of the increasing influx of divine into human life. But while art has conferred her invaluable testimony, literature has represented the more evident expansion of the mind, at the same time prophesying possibilities of development that are yet dimly apprehended.

And if the novel discloses purposes and character while history points out the onward march of nationalities with their burden of personal heroism or personal depravity, the drama more directly reveals the mighty stride of humanity, having its inception in primeval tendencies shown in ceremonial rites. It is in the history of the drama, beginning with the barbaric ceremonial and continuing the record to civilization, thus including Egypt's resurrection drama, together with the mystic rites of Greece and the Miracle Plays of Western Europe, that the development of human nature is shown in such graphic clearness that one feels the hand on the wheel which suns and souls feel, — the mingling of the divine and human, — the "leaven in the loaf," — those secret processes which to know is to marvel at. The modern drama shows the specializa-

Digitized by Google

tion of human genius in the growth of that individualism which was slow to stamp its record on the human face, — for it seizes on events that are typical and representative, and in a concrete form discloses the motives of human action. And how diverse from the early drama, the motive then single and, if worshipful, self-seeking and arrogant!

A signal example of the changes that have been going on during unnumbered ages in human nature, this complex character of the drama provides a proof of the likeness of development between the soul of man and vegetal life whose variations at last produced that paragon of flowers, the rose, — a comparison implying a power of self-renewal in the human soul, like that of a flower.

Digitized by Google

The Riverside Press
Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

JAN 27 1908 OCT 13 1908

JUN 8 1909

NOV 18 1912

JUN APR 1 1924

MAY 24 1924

CANCELLED

STATE BOARD OF CHARITIES

Digitized by Google

AL 1322.5.30
Nature and human nature,
Widener Library
004779491
3 2044 080 905 169

Digitized by Google